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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 26 *Winter, 1956-57* NUMBER 1

Egyptian Retrospect: A Partial View in Changing Perspective

IHAB H. HASSAN

As my essay goes to press, a rapid and crucial succession of events has occurred in Egypt. I have preferred, nevertheless, to let the essay stand in its original form, in the hope that whatever ironies may be discovered in it would become part of its statement.

THE AUTHOR

IT IS A MARK OF OUR RESTIVE TIMES that as the earth shrinks and tightens, and its peoples, jostling more closely, divide all the more sharply, the unknown and forgotten nations of the world are suddenly thrust upon our attention. The shock violates our expectations and leaves our responses open to the caprice of prejudice. But the experts have ready their explanation. We are told that such is the poise and hover of power in the world, such the swerving conflict of unswerving interests, such the dearness of human stakes and gravity of universal consequences, that no po-

IHAB H. HASSAN, now an American citizen, was born in Cairo in 1925 and lived in Egypt until 1945, with the exception of several summers spent in Europe. He attended the University of Cairo School of Engineering. In 1946, Mr. Hassan came to the United States on an Egyptian government fellowship, receiving a master of science degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1948. At this time he resigned his government fellowship and turned to the study of English literature, receiving his doctoral degree in 1953.

At present, Mr. Hassan is an assistant professor of English at Wesleyan University. His main interests are modern literature and critical theory, subjects on which he has written for a number of periodicals. He is now at work on a book about the younger American novelists.

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tential disequilibrium, however small or remote, may be safely tolerated. And perhaps the experts of this macabre dynamic are right, and the watch universe of the eighteenth century has become the intricate time bomb of the twentieth. Be it as it may, I choose to take my cue from an older science, that type of history which Toynbee called "philosophy teaching by example," and from an adage still older and more simple: In knowledge there is virtue, and in virtue stability. To know and to understand is still richer than to balance one interest against another, as if survival were but a juggling game.

In recent years, few of the forgotten countries have attracted more mixed attention in the United States than Egypt. We are alternately puzzled, pained or pleased, for our own mind recalls an idealistic and anticolonial past, and confronts a present ambiguous with the realities of power. The spectacular changes in the internal affairs and external status of Egypt flash luridly in front of us, against a darkening background of world tensions—Farouk, then Naguib, then Nasser; England, then America, then Russia; and ever Israel. We predict the next development in Egypt, scan its gestures, appraise its commitments. We always look ahead.

I would propose, in the interest of clarity and Christian grace, to look a little backward at the quiet or gaudy changes time leaves behind. For Egypt now, nascent and impatient as it may seem, has still to cope with the specters of its past, and its history is at once too long to remember and too unhappy to forget. I would propose, if I could, to make that renegade past serviceable to the actuality Egyptians seek and Americans seek to understand. But this would be more than I could hope to achieve: it would be enough to view steadily a man, an idea, an event, anything rooted in Egyptian soil and moving with its life, anything between that everlasting Now and everpresent Then, which, between them, hold the secret of eventuality. It would be even enough to review, in memory and reflection, a single scene: its economic and intellectual elements are made up of three classes, its contours sketch in all that Egypt was and much of what it may still be.

This is a scene which must be re-created slowly from others

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more fixed in our minds, for Egypt has many scenes and many legends, both of misery and romance. There is, for instance, the ubiquitous and somewhat garish legend of Hollywood-type effendis trafficking, with oily and inscrutable smile, in daggers, narcotics and dancing girls. There is the legend of gold-sceptered Pharoahs lying straight in their tombs and ironclad Crusaders pining in unholy dungeons; of fakirs, odalisques, eunuchs, desert saints and privateers, all tinctured in Oriental magic. There is a more noble, although hardly less exotic, legend of the Middle East created by T. E. Lawrence, Freya Stark, Doughty, Blunt, Burton and others (theirs is a world both real and enfabled). And there is that more fashionable colonial tradition of cynical tolerance against which E. M. Forster admonished his countrymen: "O reject the bitter tradition of mistrust that is served to the newcomer with his first cocktail, reject the little hints the Club provides, so helpful in detail, so harmful in bulk. In India the tradition has lasted too long, the bitterness is irremediable, the hints have usurped the whole of speech. But in this nearer East there is still hope." The hope, never large, has given way to a sharper reciprocal mistrust at the very time the world could least afford it.

To re-create the scene I have in mind one must start from the bottom, and it is there that one always finds the Egyptian fellah. The latest figures on his poverty, ill-health or illiteracy could reveal as little about him as they would about Tolstoy's serfs or Faulkner's Negroes. He is the basic human fact of Egypt, the salt of its earth, and though his lot has often been very hard, it has not been so hard as to exclude mirth and a sad dignity from his life, nor has it succeeded in corrupting his ageless loyalty to the land.

Some of my earliest recollections go back to the rural scene to which he is so permanently bound. It is but a thin, winding strip of prodigal green, caught in the south between hills of sandstone, scorched yellow and orange by a vertical sun, and fanning itself northward into a delta of towns, rivers and fields that slope gently toward the Mediterranean. The Nile, red-brown in October, rises to splendid turbulence, and before it has again subsided, its bounty lies everywhere on the land, dark and fertile. Upper Egypt, proud

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and austere; Lower Egypt, more kind and gracious! The scene, despite its crowded life, is silent and a trifle sad in the noonday heat. Few trees stand against the level horizon of dry, blue sky; and the traces of man's ancient effort to wring a living from the earth, an archaic plow standing in the field, a sakieh creaking in the shade of a willow as its churning waters splash forth—these fail to disturb the calm of a labor repeated long beyond the point of exertion.

To see the fellah go out at dawn, astraddle his donkey, a hoe slung across his shoulder, a handkerchief containing his lunch of onions, cheese and floury wafers knotted to his arm, to see him go forth day after day, seemingly from the beginning of time, unchanged and uncomplaining, is to understand the extent of Egypt's commitment to the agrarian life. Progress will no doubt change that mode of existence, and there is need for a good deal of change; but Progress had better beware what it does with the fellah, a being rooted in the habits of his forebears and attuned to the seasonal bounty of his river. Reckless industrialization could only serve to exchange his present misery with a new and more incomprehensible kind. His Moslem faith, usually broad and unfanatic, his simple loyalties which are the basis of his morality, his familial attachments—all these may provoke the ire of the impatient reformer, although in them lie the stabilizing elements of his life. Auden has somewhere observed that "every technical advance requires a parallel advance in metaphysics." Certainly every technical advance, before it can become part of the life of a community, must receive emotional and imaginative acceptance, and must be regulated to the moral reach of its individuals. (No country would willingly re-enact some of the sordid dramas staged during the Industrial Revolution in nineteenth-century Europe.) This is perhaps one of the central problems all underdeveloped countries in Asia and Africa must face. One almost wishes that something like a Rockefeller formula could be applied to Point Four programs, so that each needy country may be asked to match every imported technical expert with a native artist, scholar or intellectual who may exert a restraining influence should his homeland feel like keeping up with the bomb- or rocket-conscious Joneses. Yet if prog-

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ress may be qualified with irony, suffering can hardly be qualified in the same way. In this connection, one is forced to reckon with the frugal but unascetic character of Islam which seldom recommends suffering as a solution to any worldly or heavenly problem —discipline and fortitude are a different matter—though the Sufis might have agreed with Eckhart when he said: "The fleetest beast to bear you to perfection is suffering." Suffering! How monstrous and selfish when practiced collectively, how right for the lone and narrow soul. The fellah needs to become an individual before he can suffer with value, and to become that individual he first needs to suffer less. This, among other things, means the creation of a larger middle class.

A middle class nearly always attains to a certain educational standard. In Egypt the middle class has been so far composed of the lower ranks of government employees and, to some extent, of a growing community of modest traders and very small landowners. It is only recently that the affluent businessman has come into his own and the independent professional man has earned social recognition, each irrespective of his origin, and each despite the long-reigning prejudice which favored a stable, if torpid, career in the civil service. The men who wielded power thirty years ago, and who claimed the status of an aristocracy, were often wealthy *rentiers* in charge of the highest offices in government. This, of course, created a rather closed circle of influence, as static as it was resistant to change. There is now, thanks to ambitious, educated and well-intentioned youths of all classes, a greater degree of social fluidity—the way up and way down, though not the same, are equally open to an increasing portion of the population. But the middle class of which I speak, and which I would fain see larger, is more modest: its educational level is not of the university but of the secondary school.

The secondary school could be, as I remember it, a period of bruising and valuable initiation. In Egypt, where no Etons or Grotons were to be found, boys of all classes jostled their prejudices and bandied their enmities with characteristic ferocity in the classrooms of the government-owned public schools. At the grilled, lead-

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hued gate of the school, which shut at five minutes past eight with frightening finality and opened at five minutes before three, the parental Mercedes, Rolls or Packard may have been waiting for the fortunate students. But once inside, these fortunate ones abandoned all hope and shifted for themselves as best they could, relying on wit and fist (though Egyptian boys also fight with their unbreakable skulls) to repel all comers and absolve themselves bloodily of cowardice, effeminacy and good breeding. One played at soccer between classes, with a makeshift ball of old socks; the rest was work. Extracurricular activities were suspect, and no effort was made to develop what is called character—that usually took care of itself. I sometimes feel that these school days were less a lesson in democracy than in social acerbity, and less a development of the intellect than a test of intellectual endurance. (It was not unusual for boys who failed their final examinations to attempt suicide.) Of my secondary schoolteachers, I can only remember with affection one, an Englishman—atypical, of course. Mr. Miller taught us the King's English and communicated his humaneness to all our rowdy and insensitive souls. His pale, pinched face and distant, sunken eyes brought all the horror of "The Monkey's Paw" to us, and his flashes of humor and mimic braggadocio infused in *Montezuma's Daughter* a delightful, extraneous irony without ever impairing its romance. He had a taste for things Gothic and supernatural, a gentle way of shaming obscenity into permanent silence, and a quality both of reverence and intuitiveness which must have made him one of the saints in human relationships.

In contemporary Egypt, the secondary school assumes a new role as a closer and less abrasive contact between classes is achieved without—in the mosque, the factory, the office, the street—as well as within its bounds. The inflexible educational theory on which it was based, dominantly French, is giving way to current ideas from psychology and sociology, though it is not expected that the schools will immediately succumb to the progressive philosophy against which America is beginning to react. One hopes that the great battles of Egypt will never be fought on the playing fields of its public schools, nor is it likely that they will; but one also hopes

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that the secondary school, which is extending its influence deep into rural areas, can initiate the experiment in social harmony the country so richly needs. (Despite its militaristic bias, Egypt is now closer to democracy than it has been for many centuries, and democracy, new fledged, is always difficult to maintain. After all the revolutions the world has witnessed, it should be obvious that injustice is easier to rectify than bitterness, and equality easier to assert than meaningful distinctions.) The responsibility of the school is particularly large in view of the cultural disparity between father and son in the outlying districts, where an intelligent boy may aspire to an outlook centuries more advanced than that of his family. For if the schools have become influential through their general accessibility, the patriarchic family system, steeped in affection, ignorance and authority, still is even more so. However, what the family is powerless to give, the school is bound to provide, and against the retarding influence of the first, the latter is compelled to act.

To go up the educational ladder is also to go higher up the social scale. The universities, government-owned, are now open to all qualified students. Their educational structure resembles that of Continental more than English universities, and resembles American colleges far less. It is, in fact, one of the anomalies of Egyptian intellectual life that while American institutions are becoming increasingly popular, American universities, with the exception of Harvard and the schools of California (where the climate suits Egyptians very well), are hardly known. In the past ten years, a growing number of graduate students have been financed by the government to specialize in technical fields at various American universities. Those who are already back in Egypt have, I am told, begun to convince the educational world that their training is not inestimably inferior to the training they might have received at Berlin, Zurich, Montpellier, Paris, Oxford and, of course, Sandhurst. Still, their transatlantic sally often provokes both envy and derision, a mixture of sentiment which the European intellectual has consolidated into an almost classical prejudice. Leslie Fiedler's acute insights into the subject are as applicable to Egypt as they are

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to Italy. "The Americanization of cultural life on all levels," he writes, "is a complement to, perhaps a cause of, anti-Americanism. . . . In the end, anti-Americanism of this type permits the European to indulge simultaneously in self-hatred and self-righteousness. So handy a psychological device is not readily surrendered." But whether he is pro- or anti-American, the Egyptian university student belongs to a highly select group, keen, inflammable, opinionated and, if not incorruptible, still uncorrupted. It is a restive group which, in default of an active, dissenting and responsible coalition in the democracy Egypt wants to be, has acted as the political and moral conscience of the nation and as an index to its discontent. Unfortunately, ten years ago, once the student was graduated, entering the government service or running the family estate, his radical views mellowed faster than peaches in an Egyptian July.

The university students at Cairo were prematurely old. I remember many of them: some were warped, stunted shapes of an intense spirit feeling its way gloomily into the world; others, riotous and extravagant, squandering their days in obsessive laughter; and a few of broader vision and tougher fiber—but of all I can say that a degree of isolation was actual. Indeed, the notorious student demonstrations were sometimes but a means of communion that the university failed to provide. The university was a lecture hall or a laboratory, not a community of students, not a way of thinking and action. One studied intensively in one's field of specialization, developing almost no critical or intellectual awareness; and when the time came, one passed or failed nerve-racking examinations. The professors could be only glimpsed hurrying across the hallways or heard declaiming from a podium.

Still, the absence of eclecticism, the emphasis on self-discipline, the refusal of teachers to act as intellectual wet nurses, proved of abiding value to all serious students. The Egyptian university, riddled as it was by the anomalies and anachronisms of its situation, still could afford an intimate prospect. It was a prospect in which the drudgery of life suddenly gave way to moments of sensuous intensity, keen and random, and the hectic discipline of academic work gave birth to an alien fire, burning on the stuff of proud,

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adolescent dreams and fed with their inexhaustible power. The future danced in each flame, like an incandescent genie caught in a will of fire. Tired, purified, the mind at last turned upon itself, and the spendthrift spirit, breathless with a knowledge it did not own, dedicated all the coming years to the dream of its choice. The solitary covenant one made with fate took the untamed elements for witness. And in a Byronic moment, one swam out far into the sea on a starless night to seal the pact with aching limbs and lips filmed with brine, or one burned a palm leaf in the desert beyond the tracks of any caravan and trudged back miles in a merciless sun to spend feverish days in bed. Such were the romantic reciprocities of body and mind, the frightening certitudes of youth, the undirected energies of boys at once young and old beyond their years. Other jaunts of the willful, adolescent spirit, though less private, were shared only with a chosen few. One planned a new Moslem empire extending from the English Channel to the China Sea, of which Egypt was the natural center, and to which a sophomoric year of religious fervor would be consecrated; and in the following year one talked of the reinstatement of the ancient gods of Egypt, Amon and Horus and Set, and of a new culture to supplant the "barbarism" of the Islamic world and to usher in an era of aestheticism and sacred mysteries. Or one simply took up fencing and water polo and thought of Olympic blazers. For the imagination, which the universities left to private discipline, wandered erratically in the sun.

Why then, with few exceptions, was a mature spirit of intellectual adventure so painfully absent? The average student, who was *not* an average Egyptian, knew as much of Freud, Confucius, Mann, Voltaire, Buddha, Plato or Picasso as the man in the moon is presumed to know. (Some of these figures were obviously in cultural traditions to which he did not belong; yet if students in Chicago, Illinois, learned about Gotama, why should he, living in Cairo, have neglected such knowledge?) The fault, I think, was, and still is, partly due to the specialized nature of higher education in Egypt, partly to the cultural climate which was intolerant of all things "foreign," and partly to the emphasis on technical and professional

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knowledge which in undeveloped areas was apt to be very pronounced. Ten years ago the Faculty of Letters was in disrepute, so the legend went, open only to students of indifferent marks and dubious character, and the bright, the rich, the ambitious—they were often the same—elected the Faculties of Medicine or Engineering, the twin queens of educational society. The idealist sons of a landed aristocracy, in rebellion against the ways of their misguided fathers, dreamed of a corruption-proof technocracy which might lead their country to a destiny so long overdue. And perhaps there is nothing wrong with their dream, except that even the *Republic* seems slightly more hospitable to poet and musician.

What the Arab countries may be awakening to is that technique can be hardly considered knowledge, and that culture can be neither manufactured nor imported. The great danger which these countries run is one of judging all modes of individual behavior, all forms of knowledge and all trends of culture by one, and only one, standard: national need or national prestige. The principle can paralyze the moral and intellectual being of the individual, and can cripple his freedom. There is no doubt that efficient efforts are needed in these countries to make their vision of political freedom a permanent actuality; but it would be grimly ironic if political freedom of the state resulted in a loss of spiritual freedom to the individual. It is as if John Bull, knowing of his imminent expulsion, had left Mrs. Grundy behind to rule. Feeling this thick, damping shadow creep upon it, the Arab intelligentsia has given some signs of bestirring itself. An Egyptian novel published by New Directions; an artist's work in Steuben glass exhibited at the Metropolitan; a display of contemporary painting and sculpture in Paris; a moral voice, like Malik's of Lebanon, at the United Nations; a scholarly work on an archaeological discovery—these are the signs of a beginning more significant than the achievement of famed Egyptian swimmers of the English Channel or the threat of imported Stalin tanks. It could be the beginning of a small renascence that may come to much or nothing, a real and far-reaching bid to inform the newly released energies with *mind*.

I hope that I have made it evident that any simplified view of an

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outdated society leaves much unexplained of the aspect Egypt currently presents to the world. That aspect has been usually explained in terms of Arab "nationalism" or Arab "character," in terms of a long tradition of anticolonial associations, in terms of local factions restrained by despotism or corruption or the appeal of a militant foreign policy—such clichés of political perception invite sharper definition. Some observers have even relegated all the drives and motives of modern Egypt to nationalism. So be it. But let us at least recall that coexistent with this nationalist tradition there is another and older cosmopolitan tradition, and that to understand the first, the second must be brought to light.

Egypt has stood as a strategic crossroad of the world for over five millenia. First came the rich caravans trekking across the Sinai Desert; then stately ships gliding on the Suez Canal; then the jet planes, fed on the adjacent oil fields of Iraq and Arabia on which the security of the free world depends. From the beginning of history, Egypt has attracted the unsolicited interest of the major powers of the world. Its people, composed of Arab, Turkish, Albanian, Circassian, Coptic, Greek, Italian, French, Sudanese and Jewish strains, have not always shown the cultural or spiritual solidarity they are now reputed to possess. Yet they did not emigrate. Cramped into a narrow, arable valley, impoverished or discontented, Egyptians—and there are now more than twenty million of them—never left their native village, like Scot or Syrian, to barter their wits and brawn on distant shores. Their roots, moldering as they may be, took quickly in the soil of the Nile, and the clannish bonds of the nomadic Arabs, once the bonds of blood and spirit, became for the sedentary Egyptians bonds of place and ties of association. Some came from more arid lands and more strained circumstances; they came for profit and stayed. Some came as conquerors, and some as dispossessed. For many, the cultural and geographical homes refused to coincide in time. The melting pot, being too small, failed to amalgamate.

The result of all this was the creation of a somewhat uniform lower and middle class, dominantly Arabic in culture, a community of traders, descended from southern European countries, largely

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self-sufficient, and a landed upper class, of mixed Turkish and Egyptian ancestry, fairly cosmopolitan. The last group gave rise to a generation whose first language was French or sometimes Turkish or English; a generation which moved nimbly around two cultures, one native and archaic, the other speciously European, both superimposed on a metropolis like Cairo or Alexandria, and yet lying decades, perhaps even centuries, apart. The interest of their situation is neither sociological nor sentimental. They are now stripped of an influence they did not always deserve; but the course of Egyptian affairs will in part depend on the manner in which this knowledgeable group will respond to a new conception of civic responsibility provided by the current leaders, men of vigor and integrity, whose origin is nevertheless closer to the traditional elements of the country and more representative of its native aspirations. R. P. Blackmur, back from a tour of the Middle East, was particularly observant when he said that this class in Egypt "is the only class whose cause can be promoted with any hope of tempering, reducing, and perhaps obviating the dangers of the new illiteracy which flows from universal education." To the extent that the remnants of this educated, if somewhat frayed, "aristocracy" give themselves to the labor of an evolutionary order, tempering it intellectually as they are revived by it morally, Egyptian cultural unity may be achieved and the anomalies of its social structure may be raised from the top.

But I fear that I have put it all too simply, simplicity being the vice of optimism and the danger of revolutionary faith. The problem of the Egyptian cosmopolite must be caught in another and larger perspective. What contributes to his ambiguous status is not only an economic fact, say the equitable limitation recently imposed on the quantity of land he may own, thereby limiting his freedom to travel and to loaf; nor is it simply a matter of cultural background that the parental library to which he first had access was heavily weighted in favor of the French classics, or that his father, who had probably studied law in French, took his family to Europe four or five months of every year. The problem of that deracinated individual is in some respects spiritual; as such, it is

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relevant both to the cultural dilemma which the American faced some fifty years ago and to the politico-moral choice with which so many intellectuals in Europe and Asia are confronted today.

Let me explain. Almost half a century ago, Henry James wrote: "It's a complex fate being an American, and one of the responsibilities it entails is fighting against a superstitious valuation of Europe." I believe, and for the same reasons, that the fate of the Westernized Egyptian is no less complex. The superstitious valuation of Europe, rampant in his environment, now provokes an absurd show of imitative gestures and now animates a sweeping revulsion to all things European. The matter is further complicated by the fact that, unlike the nineteenth-century American, the modern Egyptian has only the weakest of ancestral bonds (there is *some* intermarriage) with the European countries which have so largely conditioned his sensibility. But the situation, I think, is not entirely different from the situation of the Mediterranean people in the Hellenic ages; and if Paul and the sages of Alexandria and Constantinople could leave so abiding an influence on the Western World, it may not be altogether fanciful to envisage an inverse influence in an era of cultural concert between East and West.

Egypt has recently experienced a necessary, crucial and controversial political change that may weld its destiny into a new mold. Its dangerous future is now its own. George Orwell may have been right in saying that "all revolutions are failures, but they are not all the same failure." Possibly. Yet ultimate failure cannot be used as the immediate excuse for it, and sometimes failure simply cannot be afforded. Egypt is on its own. The English are no longer there to tamper, however distantly, with its life, and they are not even there to take an "undeserved" blame for everything that may go amiss. And perhaps the distinguished ghosts of Cromer and Kitchener are finally still. I know that in certain circles, which entertain an exaggerated sense of their own realism, it is proper to say that England has done a great deal for Egypt. Quite possibly. But what I know with certainty is that it has done a great deal of harm. It has left a legacy of hate and it has ignited the terrible flame of nationalism. The fault may be laid to the grandiose politics

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which reigned in another age, to the stresses of our own divisive age, or simply to the undeveloped human heart. It no longer matters; or if it does, it matters only as an example from which America, and Egypt itself, might learn.

No one can afford an undeveloped heart. No one can afford to be the man Acton described: "The man who prefers his country before every other duty shows the same spirit as the man who surrenders every right to the State. They both deny that right is superior to authority." Once an Egyptian student wrote in his notebook a phrase strangely reminiscent of Patrick Henry. He wrote, "Give me liberty, or give me death," and he went out and died in a riot against the English. He died nobly; he may have died well. But I now wish that not one student but all would *live* for another kind of liberty even harder to attain: the largess of heart and mind to which all of mankind is entitled—and on which its survival depends. For there is just a chance that such largess could make the politics of power more intelligible.

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The Decline of Book Reviewing

GEOFFREY WAGNER

WE HAD BEEN CHATTING for about twenty minutes in the club car of a train bound for Boston. The man was probably in his late thirties, well dressed, and he was in the communications industry. He was, he informed me, joining a colleague in Boston, and the two of them were getting together over a new idea in the field of opinion polls—in order to see "if it spelt mother."

"We're going to give this thing a trial run in some of the Eastern states first," he explained. "You know, fly it through the barn a couple of times and watch if it molts." He sipped his drink and added, somewhat apologetically: "You know the kind of thing, shoot it down the line and see if it comes back express or local." He took another reflective sip of his Scotch. "By the way, what do you do?"

I told him I was a literary critic. He glanced at me with a merry suspicion, rather like a friendly dog being teased.

"You mean you review books?"

"Sometimes," I admitted. But he was still puzzled. I explained further, and we began discussing the book business. He asked me a lot of questions, and once, when he elicited that I had appeared on television, he visibly brightened. Finally, he glanced at his watch: "Well, have to skid along now. Nice chat. Sorry if I bombed you any, but frankly I'm not quite wired in on that book deal of yours." He handed me his card. "Give me a growl when you're next in New York." We shook hands and he left, smiling ruefully to himself.

Now I am afraid it is undoubtedly true that the gap between book critics and reviewers is extremely wide today. On turning up

✪ Books shortly forthcoming by GEOFFREY WAGNER include a novel, *Rage on the Bar*; a study of Wyndham Lewis; and translations of Gérard de Nerval. Mr. Wagner, who teaches in the department of English of the City College of New York, has contributed to most of the review media he discusses in his article.

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Stanley Edgar Hyman's *The Armed Vision*, for instance, a work recently reprinted in paperback format, we find the following: "One of the most remarkable features of our time is the number of ostensible critics, like Henry Seidel Canby or the brothers Van Doren, who on examination turn out to be disguised reviewers." This is as if to say no form of life is any lower than that of the book reviewer. This is only one of many such comments made by Mr. Hyman, who fairly represents the professional critic and certainly regards the average reviewer as beneath contempt. What must the subscriber to the *New York Times Book Review* or the *Saturday Review* think when stumbling on a passage (again from *The Armed Vision*) such as this?

> . . . in America, Mark Van Doren's *Private Reader*, a manifesto for reading as superficially as possible, thus representing "the private reader," and J. Donald Adams's *The Shape of Books to Come*, a triumph of critical incapacity so complete that it makes Max Eastman seem literate by comparison. But the group hardly warrants even this much discussion.

Or compare the scornful silence accorded those like Gilbert Highet or Anthony West (or, from England, V. S. Pritchett) in the little reviews that abound in this country today. After all, even a reviewer who goes as deeply (if as wrongly) into books as does Edmund Wilson emerges from Mr. Hyman's pages as a mere "popularizer." And I am afraid that the average book reviewer in America is doing little to prove the professional critic's strictures about him wrong—least of all in the field of fiction. "It is acknowledged by the entire book trade but out of delicacy rarely mentioned in print," wrote Ralph Thompson of the Book-of-the-Month Club in a recent issue of the *Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors*, that "we have about one adequate review department to every 20,000,000 inhabitants. . . . There are signed reviews by the carload in major American newspapers that no self-respecting instructor in English would accept from an athletic sophomore. The situation is approximately the same in one region of the republic as in another." John Aldridge has nibbled at the edge of this problem in his new book, *In Search of Heresy*, but he does not seem to realize the real dilemma here.

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Of course, it is true that there will always be reviewers who are no more than cheerleaders for fiction. Barkham, Fuller, Rolo, Fadiman, Stern, Kelly, the functionaries of the *Saturday Review* syndicate—what do their names matter?—they are the gee-whiz boys of modern fiction, reviewers who seem to imagine America so culturally backward that the production of a book, *any* book, is a triumph of pioneering ingenuity to be greeted with glee. (Gee whiz! There's a book! seems to be their general reaction.) Several years ago Louis Bromfield was able to count as many as one hundred and thirty-seven novels all called "the best novel of the year" by various such reviewmen—to coin Stephen Potter's term—as these. Compton Mackenzie had said the same thing of England even earlier: "I have counted as many as fifteen works of genius published in one week." The novel, therefore, that fails to find some reviewer to call it "brilliant" or "superb" or "important . . . thoroughly recommended" may well be genuinely interesting. This is not being frivolously perverse. The gee-whiz boys are doing a grave disservice to the industry they are supposed to be serving. Patronizingly they imagine the general American audience as both illiterate and uncritical, to be stampeded into bookstores with hoots of joy at the appearance of any and every book.

Moreover, it is possible to pick up a copy of one of our Sunday book-supplements today and find two totally different reviewing standards obtaining, even on the same page. Recently I noticed a novel by a leading American writer of senior standing given a severe review, possibly deserved, by a reviewer who was himself a well-known critic, a university professor. The novel may have been weak—I have not read it myself—but I feel reasonably certain in assuming that it was of a different stature from the conventional bosomy historical which was adulated in the neighboring column by another reviewer, a historical novelist blessed with the apparently requisite triple-barreled moniker (Frances Blatherington Jones or Mary Hopkinson Tosh, or some such). But a visitor from Mars, knowing nothing of our literary scene, would understandably assume that the historical reviewed was a humdinger, *qualitatively* superior to the neighboring "serious" novel reviewed. It cannot be said that this visitor from Mars would find the same

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bathetic confusion of kind and degree if he were to pick up, say, *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* or the *Times Literary Supplement*. In such media a tolerable homogeneity of approach is maintained. Most of the reviewers will have somewhat the same standards, and the alert reader can soon formulate a yardstick. With two, or sometimes three, standards operating (American avant-garde, middlebrow industrial, trashy historical, say) in the same week, the reader, once bitten, fights shy of the reviewers, and begins to trust them less and less. The fact that the supplement may feature one or two first-class reviews by authorities won't help. It is what Arthur Koestler has called, in his witty essay of this name, "The Reader's Dilemma." And, in passing, one can't help wondering in this connection why it is always in the big review-supplements that one finds the blasts against "criticism."

All this is a considerable pity because literary criticism originally grew out of reviewing. Aristotle's *Poetics* contains a number of reviews; indeed, it is perhaps particularly interesting to reread the passages on *Oedipus Rex* in this light. It was probably Jeffrey's *Edinburgh Review*, as much as any organ, that started the real divorce between reviewing and criticism which has been legalized today; the famous example is the review of a Scott novel in this journal which was one-third as long as the orginal work itself.

The correspondent in this divorce case, as far as fiction goes, was undoubtedly Percy Lubbock, whose invaluable *The Craft of Fiction*, first published in 1921 and reissued two years ago in England, is indubitably what Philip Toynbee calls it, "the first serious attempt in English to establish a critical norm, and vocabulary, for the methods of fiction." Before this there had existed only the prefaces or occasional comments of great novelists, from Fielding to Conrad and James. Lubbock's brilliant little book, glowing with affection for the fictional form, was written before—one should say, on the verge of—the great innovations of our time, of Joyce, Gide, of the Englished Proust, and Woolf, and it is marred by a certain stiffness of approach, as was, indeed, E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* which followed hot on its heels in 1927, and which itself produced its own limited rejoinders, like Edwin Muir's *The Struc-*

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ture of the Novel or Van Meter Ames's *Aesthetics of the Novel* (in America) of the year following.

But Lubbock was really the first to study the aesthetics of fiction as a whole, and after him there could be no turning back. The divorce was complete. Lubbock was one of the first to realize that the contemporary novelist expressed his vision by his style, by the *manner* of saying what he had to say, and his book is filled with pregnant prophecies, such as "the novel may now be starting upon a fresh life," "there are unheard-of experiments to be made," and "the want of a received nomenclature is a real hindrance." Lubbock was at the time overconcerned with the method of narration, I think, with his celebrated "point of view" or "centre of vision" (now taken to such ridiculous and restrictive extremes by contemporary editors), but he loosed the floodgates—Beach, Liddell, Hart, Daiches, Wilson, the treatises on fictional technique began streaming in—and no self-respecting critic of the novel could call himself a reviewer again.

Yet it is equally the large reviewing media that have now reciprocally driven the critics from their doors, and so made for increasing distrust on the part of the public. Who has not heard complaints from some friend who read a eulogistic review of what turned out to be a rotten novel? While there can be no question of the reviewer today not being allowed the free play of review, one cannot help observing that the big review media seem to employ extremely unexacting and optimistic men and women. There is even the suspicion abroad that a reviewer is dropped like a hot potato should he consistently "pan" the books he is sent. (The sourpuss! Some poor devil has to sell these things.) At the same time, the university critic, with standards to maintain, with the eyes of his colleagues upon him, dare not—even if his conscience would let him—be as friendly toward the new, slick, empty novel he is sent as his editor (whose job depends on running the supplement which is supported largely by publishers' advertisements anyway) would like him to be. The result is that after a while the editor gets tired of the adverse reviews coming in from the critic, and he hires a reviewman instead. The critic he reserves for those occasional reviews of

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books by other literary critics—some new study of Melville or Whitman perhaps—on which he can let the fellow have his head without the fear that many outside university circles will read it. And, of course, one or two reviews of this nature, scrambled in somehow between a review of five new cartoon books and eight new cookbooks, on the back of the juvenile page and just after the mysteries, gives that dignified front to his supplement, the spurious façade that it is presiding over book publication as well as over the tastes of the masses.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, the readership is not really deceived by this any longer. The dichotomy has come out into the open now. Readers have seen the "subnovel" (as Professor Leslie Fiedler calls it) *Marjorie Morningstar* reviewed on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review* in a friendly notice by Maxwell Geismar, only to be followed by his sharp "criticism" of the same book in the pages of the *Nation*. Readers are also able to compare, if they wish, Edgar Johnson's kid-glove review of Gordon Ray's recent book on Thackeray in the *New York Times Book Review* with his distinctly less cordial approach to Ray in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* for last March. On the other hand, to take a reverse example, *Molloy* by Samuel Beckett, given a full-page eulogy in *Le Figaro Littéraire* when it appeared in Paris, was totally ignored by the *New York Times* when it came out here a season or so ago. And *Molloy* makes another point, for only recently it was the subject of the lead review in the *Observer* in England, although it had not been published in that country and the reviewer had to refer to the Paris edition. What is more, Beckett was arguably as little known in England (though not in France) as here. Of course, after the success of his play *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett became of news value and the *New York Times Book Review* of September 16, 1956, prominently reviewed his *Malone Dies* (although the hardback edition was here limited to five hundred copies). As Harvey Breit confessed in the subsequent sixtieth anniversary issue of the *Times Book Review*, "We are part of a newspaper and our first job is to report the news of books." But, one feels like replying, a newspaper at least dis-

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criminates *qualitatively* in its news. Does the *New York Times Book Review*, despite its pretensions, do so in its books? Another reverse example would be *Born Guilty* by the Chilean novelist Manuel Rojas; when this came out in England recently, it was the subject of lead reviews everywhere, the *Times Literary Supplement* likening the author to Traven, Genêt and Miller. When the small firm of Library Publishers issued this novel here over a year ago, it was scarcely reviewed at all, and did not even rate a listing in the *Book Review Digest.*

Parenthetically one must add, however, in the interests of some sort of fairness, that the European book review is the product of its very different social background. While Europeans stoutly maintain that the hieratic social structure of the past is now eradicated and reading has become "democratic" (*vide* the European sales of *Gone With the Wind*), nevertheless—certainly in England, at least —the old educational system has left its mark on reading habits.

One out of every four Englishmen, according to the Library Association of Great Britain, now does his or her entire reading in some library system, and I venture to conjecture that the bulk of this mass reading audience is built up from the 93.5 per cent of British citizens who, before the last war, did not go beyond secondary school education. Indeed, even today, with the recent raising of the school-leaving age in England (which the Education, or Fisher, Act had only put up to fourteen as late as 1918), it is estimated that a mere 13.7 per cent of the British population have stayed on at the state grammar and technical schools beyond the now compulsory age of sixteen. The recent expansion of the public and commercial (Harrods or Boots) libraries, which tend to buy fiction by the yard, has been accompanied in England by an overall drop in fiction sales, though not in the number of titles. When literacy comes cheap, books lose "face," and borrowing replaces buying. The reason that Great Britain produces so many more fiction titles annually than America is economic rather than cultural; as an article in the *Times Literary Supplement* confesses:

> British publishers claim that their fixed overheads are higher in relation to their turnover than in most other trades. . . . A few years ago a leading

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publisher of fiction showed statistically that it was more profitable to issue fifty books a year than to limit his output to ten books, supposing that in each case 60 per cent were commercial failures.

In fact, the nature of the British library audience can be seen by the recent leaps in library purchases in fields such as chemistry and physics, engineering, electricity and mechanics, medical and surgical, and so forth. These library readers do not, by and large, pay much, if any, attention to the fiction book reviews. And they constitute the mass of British readers. A UNESCO survey lately computed that over 311 million books are borrowed every year from county and municipal libraries in the United Kingdom, which is not very far short of the figure given for the United States, 349 million, although America has over three times Britain's population.*

Consequently, the urbane and cultivated pages of, say, the *Times Literary Supplement* operate in something of a vacuum, or at least appeal to a very limited elite; we forget, especially when contemplating the august ranks of the present British Cabinet, that before the last war only 6.5 per cent of the British population went through the formal public (i.e., private) school-university system. According to a "small experiment in market research" made recently in England to test which papers and journals, either by the reviews or the publishers' advertisements they contained, had influenced the selection of books, the *Times Literary Supplement* rated only 5.85 out of some eighty journals tested, the *New Statesman and Nation* only 2.15. Advertising rates in the *Times Literary Supplement* are only £2 per s.c. inch, as against £11 in the *Observer* and £13 in the *Sunday Times* (Kemsley). When C. P. Snow recently resigned as novel reviewer for the *Sunday Times*, his valedictory article was an open confession of the impotence of the British reviewer to influence taste.

* Just how badly hit the British middle classes have been over the past few years was revealed in two articles on their plight in the *Sunday Times* (July 1 and July 8, 1956). In the second of these there are several breakdowns of personal income given; a "Bank manager," for example, allows himself a "personal expenditure" including the cost of his clothes (though excluding his car expenses) of only £30 per annum, or about 12*s.* a week. Obviously this class cannot be buying many books today.

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Now in America, of course, it is axiomatic that culture may, nay should, be popular—in the sense of being accessible to all. All readers, the whole heterogeneous public, are permitted to participate in the book review media (cp., the "Queries and Answers" section of the *New York Times Book Review*). This is presumably the reason why this review featured *Marjorie Morningstar* and Alec Waugh's *Island in the Sun* (previously serialized in a ladies' magazine) on its front pages. It is why, in all sincerity, one supposes, this review featured on its first three pages not long ago the following: (1) a book of political memoirs; (2) a study of Gershwin; (3) an autobiography of Joe Pasternak—the review accompanied by a photograph showing Joe chewing the fat with Shirley Temple; and (4) an atrabilious attack on *Ulysses* by J. Donald Adams, the burden of which last was—You don't have to read Joyce, folks, he isn't going to last. In other words: All The News That FITS We Print. I take it that this attitude is the reason, since I do not personally subscribe (as some I know do) to the theory that advertising appropriations influence review space allotted. I do not do so out of experience; the least advertised of my own four novels published in this country received the most reviewing. Q. D. Leavis, however, disagrees; in her famous *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932), a work that can hardly be overrecommended to those in "the field of books," Mrs. Leavis asserts: "It has already become practically impossible to get a book reviewed unless it is advertised. . . . We may well see a return to the primitive circulation of manuscripts among a select company." Those who adhere to the notion of political coercion in the reviewing departments, incidentally, would possibly be interested in Irene Corbally Kuhn's article on the subject in the *American Legion Magazine* for January, 1951; I personally have no method of judging the validity of the accusations in this article.

Now although the emphasis on popular appeal is understandable, and in its way honorable, the situation contains its own kind of coercion. One cannot, presumably, take exception to the reviewing of books on canasta or Bing Crosby (which are surely going to sell themselves anyway) except on the most reactionary grounds of good literature, or possibly of protecting the public from wasting

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its money. This is what the readership is interested in, we are told, and there is little answer allowed to that. Speaking at a recent Trade Book Clinic of the American Institute of Graphic Arts on "What I Look For in a Book," Orville Prescott plumped first for "titles that constitute news" for his column—and over the luncheon table the heads of fellow reviewers nodded knowingly. (However, he also cited "books of worth by unknown authors.")

On the other hand, we can legitimately take exception to the concentration on laudatory notices of books in the public eye. Geismar's review would be a case in point here—could he have printed his *Nation* attack (or Johnson his slaughter of Ray) on the front page of the *Times Book Review,* one wonders?—or the fact that the latter journal did not even notice at all the 1955 National Book Award winner in nonfiction, Herbert Kubly's *American in Italy,* because (on the testimony of an editor on the staff) the resultant review was a damaging one. I personally feel this sort of thing is becoming absurd. The other day a student of mine showed me what he called an extremely adverse review of a new novel; actually most of the review was polite exposition, with only one line of faint carping at the end. A "minus" is given by the *Book Review Digest* nowadays for anything short of a "rave" notice. All this was mulled over at a recent "Critics Meet the Authors" session arranged by the Authors' Guild. A number of reviewers spoke. Elizabeth Janeway pleaded that reviewers save their superlatives for really important novels, while A. C. Spectorsky, who once reviewed books for the *Chicago Sun* among his other accomplishments, said:

> In book reviews there is terrible inflation and repetition of language. . . . Book reviewing is a genteel profession, like running a tea shop, out of the mainstream of life. Reviewers are a poor, hardworking lot, and they could write what they really think only if they had independent incomes.

Yet, the truth is that most serious publishers, not to mention authors, would welcome less "genteel" reviewing. The more reviewers continue to write extensions of the blurb in place of reviews, the less distinction will be made between serious fiction and trash. In this connection one may perhaps deplore the common

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American (for it is certainly not European) practice of giving out novels to practitioners in the field to review. The historical goes to a historical novelist, the political novel to a political novelist, and so forth. This makes, I think, for two kinds of review, neither of which is balanced: the frankly catty review (anything you can do, I can do better), and its reverse, the overgenerous notice. Actually, despite the bile with which novelists are so frequently credited, I believe the latter to be the predominating type that results from this method, particularly in the field of popular fiction. A few years ago it was possible for nine British novelists out of ten to show fantastically flattering remarks by Elizabeth Bowen, whose reviews in the *Tatler* scarcely ever contained an unkind word in them. Colette, when asked before she died why she was so extraordinarily flattering in her book reviews, replied: "Je ne suis pas une coupeuse de têtes." Charming enough, but this doesn't help publishers to put out good fiction, and it makes for that double reviewing standard I have mentioned above. Rex Stout recently called H. L. Mencken "the most influential reviewer of our time," and no one could call Mencken overgenerous. If the day ever comes when every reviewer of every novel writes like John Barkham or Edmund Fuller, publishers will be able to bank on every novel being favorably reviewed, and so discount the present hazard in this connection in the industry. And to set a seal of approval on any and every novel would, of course, work against the more discriminating houses.

What is the remedy? "The essentials of a book review," wrote Hazlitt, although for another audience than ours, "are that it give an adequate description of the book itself, and convey something of its tone and quality." But he at once went on to point out that it should be "vivid and exciting, that it reveal qualities of intuitive insight or analytic penetration," and so on. In his book called *Book Reviewing* (Knopf, 1927), Wayne Gard lists some description of the work under review as necessary for the reviewer, but it is also obvious that he regards a dispassionate, analytic criticism of a professional nature as the prime ingredient of any review.

Thus, I would first propose—it would, presumably, be too much to hope for the return of the critic to the fold—that book

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reviews be much less slavishly expository. What has happened, of course, is that the more serious reviewer, given four hundred pages of balderdash to review, simply daren't say what he thinks about the book—it would be unprintable. What's more, he wants the forty dollars for another review, which he won't get, he's quite sure, if he's overderogatory. He falls back, therefore, on describing the plot. As Spectorsky put it, faced with the bosomy historical, all the reviewer can say is: "If jumbo historical novels are your dish, you may like this one." Very rarely, Spectorsky went on, could he add: "As for me, I think it's atrocious and a waste of paper." A good case in point of the change from critic to reviewer could be observed recently in the reviews written for the *New York Times Book Review* by Walter Allen while on a visiting lectureship at Coe College. Allen's first reviews were nearly "criticism" (or at least what passes for it in England), but he seemed to grow milder and milder until his review of May 20 last can be seen to be absolutely typical of the average Sunday novel-review.

Now I am not arguing that every reviewer should lam into every novel he gets. According to Orville Prescott's last book, the actual business of physically sorting the books for review exhausts a daily reviewer of the *New York Times*. This is not an appeal to be highbrow. But let us get book reviewing out of what Spectorsky calls the "tea shop" and back into the "mainstream of life." Let the reviewer assume that, after the initial, germane facts have been communicated, we are all able to read the jacket blurb, not to mention *Publishers' Weekly*. Book reviewers should be encouraged to be far more severe on bad novels than they are. Only in a climate of thoroughly honest and independent opinion can the "maverick" or the "sleeper"—a title like *Cards of Identity*, say—flourish, and it is on such as these that the *cultural* health of the publishing industry thrives.

Meanwhile, the allocation of novels to fellow practitioners does not make for any kind of dispassionate reception, one way or the other. So I would suggest giving novels to potential critics rather than colleagues, and in this way establish an over-all standard on which the reader can depend. In this way the sensibilities of the public may be improved, and reviewers be relied upon to eval-

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uate books by degree. There are, alas, only a very few fortunate individuals who can combine, with the grace of a Lionel Trilling or a Harry Levin, the arts of criticism and reviewing. But it is this kind of critic, rather than the hack reviewman who is presently working for the large Sunday media, who has a deep love for the "craft of fiction."

Finally, there is the problem of the anonymous review. Here I do not refer to the little snippet notices carried at the back of something like the *New Yorker*, in which, as it happens, the nineteenth-century "moral" review is extremely apparent still and where, according to Granville Hicks, "incompetence turns up, in either the long reviews or the short, every second or third week." (This attack on Anthony West was followed up by Laura Z. Hobson in her "Trade Winds" column for the *Saturday Review*; West replied with a letter to the August 4, 1956, issue of this journal.) In attacking the standards of reviewing of the *New Yorker* in his column in the *New Leader* for May 14 last, Hicks came out strongly against the anonymous review: "Anonymity also seems to encourage bad taste, and the brief reviewer, trying hard to be smart, sometimes succeeds merely in being vulgar." No, I mean the extended anonymous review or, better still, the whole book supplement advanced unsigned (as with the *Times Literary Supplement*). I am fully aware of the dangers inherent in this kind of notice; they are thrashed out from time to time in the correspondence columns of the *Times Literary Supplement*, usually by embittered authors who, as Merle Miller put it recently, don't know whose nose they want to punch. Frankly, I feel that these dangers are much less noxious to the production of good literature than what is happening at the moment. And I feel sure that it was in sympathy with this feeling that a publisher remarked to me recently that in its way *Time* is presently one of the most honest book-reviewing organs operating. It may be, as John Updike wrote not long ago in the *New Yorker*, that—

> For *Life* is joy and *Time* is gay
> And *Fortune* smiles on those
> Good books that say, at some length, "Yea,"
> And thereby spite the Noes.

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But all the same one knows where one is when reading *Time*. One is aware of the biases and one does not find a double standard of reviewing in operation. Moreover, its pages are by and large rather too expensive for book publishers to advertise in. No, in the anonymous review, the reviewer can be extremely damaging. He is relieved of any necessity to show off, and he has no feeling of being caught up in a trade organ. There is one other positive recommendation I have, at least as regards the large weekly media, and that is to assign one reviewer to cover several novels, as is the case in Europe and in several of our own little magazines (in their "Fiction Logs," which on the whole work out very well). In this way, we know where we are with our reviewer—*Self Condemned* by Wyndham Lewis and *Mary Anne* by Daphne du Maurier were both reviewed in the same column of the *Observer* by David Paul—and we are unlikely to get that vitiating and annoying confusion of levels I have mentioned.

In conclusion, one may surely advocate that the average book review be better written. It was as editress of the *Dial* that Marianne Moore wrote of a book review that "in its own right, it may be and ought to be literature."

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Fishermen on a Foggy Day

DOROTHY COWLES PINKNEY

It was no day to lift a hand,
Let alone lift anchor, move
Forward into a molten world.
History dropped behind us. Land
Was of the billionth century gone.
True facts go down on such a day
Like stones.
Among the wrecked appeals of dawn,
Indifferent, tolled a lame duet,
The bell buoy's treble tones,
A child at practice, laggard, bored;
The foghorn sounding sullen depths
Of groans.

By noon the catch was fair.
We filled the hold but later grew uneasy
Whether we fished in sky or sea,
Which was the vertical and which
The horizontal measurement
We held to. Fog as thick as this
Might have dissolved our gravity;
Then it occurred! What fished for us
Gigantic, skilled . . . the triple hook
Showing its prongs in wavery
Distortion, close . . .

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And what a desperate splash
Not to be dredged up, torn from bottom
In our own bed of seaweed! Breath
Boiled to the surface, a burbling wail;
The way we slipped from ledge to ledge
Among the sickly creepers deep-down-deep
Was all that brought us home to cite
The madman's thicktongued tale.

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Mr. Riesman's Consumers

ROBERT WHEELER

WITH THE PUBLICATION OF *The Lonely Crowd* in 1950, David Riesman joined the host of critics of the American middle classes whose public has consisted mainly of the very groups denigrated. Like the work of H. L. Mencken, Sinclair Lewis, Ortega y Gasset and many others, Mr. Riesman's work has been most enthusiastically accepted by just those urban middle-class groups that he most severely castigates, and this acceptance has given it wide influence. *The Lonely Crowd* has appeared as a paperback and has sold in enormous quantity for a book of its kind. Its ideas have permeated what is surely one of the largest configurations of inside dopesters in the world, the editors of the Luce publications and their vast audience. Its influence among middle-class educators and their captive audiences has been such as to turn such phrases as "other-direction" into campus patois.

These things taken together indicate, in the Madison Avenue phrase, how pervasively we have "bought" Mr. Riesman. To an astonishing degree we have become his consumers. And the portion of Mr. Riesman upon which we most seem to be gorging ourselves is precisely his denigrating view of us.

There is no doubt at all that the very brilliance of Riesman's ideas is in large part responsible for this. That he is among the very few social scientists to disarm the suspicion of professional scholars in the humanities is indicative. That there are insights in *The Lonely Crowd* and in other of Mr. Riesman's writings that considerably increase our knowledge of ourselves and of our ways of life is beyond question. Much of Riesman's influence depends upon the particular pertinence of such insights to our immediate experience. His hell is not for the other people, it is for us. Applied

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to our situations and to those of our friends and enemies, these insights seem to exert a powerful and subtle force of truth. It is this brilliant and ingenious aptness to some of our specific experiences, in fact, which has made *The Lonely Crowd* one of the most eloquent and influential critiques of the American middle classes that has been written recently.

There is a good deal more to *The Lonely Crowd,* however, than its profuse illuminations of immediate experience, for these have been put together painstakingly to form a systematic theoretical unit. The book's thesis rests in the strong sense in which it suggests that our social development has been bounded by governing necessities which we, in general, cannot escape.

It is this systematic aspect of Riesman's work that gives it the emotional impact of an intense and cogent pessimism. It is largely with this aspect that I shall be concerned, but before ending discussion of the pertinence of the insights, it is best to realize that such pertinence is a dubious argument in favor of any general theory. Like Marx's or Freud's, Riesman's insights may seem to his converts to be applicable everywhere, but it is only in testing their cogency when related to his system of thought that one can hope to discover in what degree his pessimism is warranted.

II

The first thing one must do in this testing, oddly enough, is to establish firmly the fact that *The Lonely Crowd* is a work of denigration. This is because its author fails of being a successful ironist in that its pages are littered with opposing points of view which are not fused together. In scattered passages he seems, in fact, to suggest that our situation is filled with hopeful possibilities. Our contemporary, other-directed character type may be freed from the shackles of conformity in many ways, he says, especially through such devices as automats and avocational counseling. Mr. Riesman is also careful in several passages to assure us that the modern other-directed man is in no sense to be considered inferior to his inner-directed predecessor. Both, he tells us, are equally conformity types, each with its merits and defects. By themselves such passages imply

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the author's assurance that there has been no general deterioration in our cultural situation.

There is also diffuse evidence in *The Lonely Crowd* that Riesman is on the side of those humanists who believe that through their own creative choices individuals can transcend the environmental forces which surround them. Such statements seem to imply that none of the larger forces he has described operate as binding necessities on American society today.

But none of these passages are united logically with the main point of view developed in *The Lonely Crowd*. In fact, they are irreconcilable with it. This becomes clear when we examine the causes that Mr. Riesman assigns for the development of his three conformity types and in his analysis of autonomy.

Starting with agrarian-based societies prior to the rise of modern science and industrialism, Riesman has traced the evolution of dominant modes of character conformity from tradition-directed through inner-directed to other-directed. He assigns three major causes for these changes: the rise of science and technology, with accompanying urban industrialization; the resulting changes in population curves; and the rise of a consumption-oriented society. If this interpretation is correct, then Riesman is arguing that the development of other-direction in contemporary American society is due to the operation of historical forces which are impersonal and immense. They are among the central, shaping forces in our history of the past four hundred years. They are forces as impossible for the individual to alter as the tides. True, the individual can save himself by changing his attitude toward these forces, by becoming autonomous, but this is somewhat analogous to Marx's aristocrat, who can become a revolutionary if he comes to terms with the inevitable. On Riesman's evidence, automats and avocational counselers can halt the further encroachments of other-direction only if they can change the population statistics and the main trend of our economic development. The true meaning of Mr. Riesman's analysis on this point is pessimistic indeed.

When we ask whether in Riesman's opinion our cultural situation has deteriorated with the rise of other-direction, his discussion

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of autonomy is the decisive test. The qualities that mark autonomy in human character are of fundamental importance to Riesman, as they should be to any civilized person. He has told us in the opening pages of *Faces in the Crowd* that autonomy served him and his colleagues as an ideal beside which his conformity types were measured. Autonomy, he has told us, "refers to those who are in their character capable of freedom," who are able to transcend the binding limits of their culture. They are able to conform to the norms of their society or to reject them as a matter of responsible choice. To become autonomous one must be able to choose one's style of life as an act of individual creation. In the long view, creative acts are the chief sign of autonomy since it is the transvaluating function of the creative act which provides the main evidence that its maker has purposefully transcended the going values of his society. Heroes, however, are not necessarily all autonomous. Autonomous men may choose not to be heroes, and heroes may be irrationally driven. Nevertheless, Riesman's exemplars of the autonomous are all creative in some fashion, and it is chiefly by this that we know them.

If this is the meaning of autonomy, the position that he assigns to the autonomous man in the American middle classes today will tell a great deal about Riesman's judgment of our cultural situation. What he has to say about it is both clear and harsh. At present, he says, autonomous men "face different and more subtle obstacles than the autonomous among the inner-directeds and have lost many old defenses available to the latter." They "face problems far more acute than those faced by the autonomous among the inner-directeds." "Autonomy," he concludes, "in an era depending on inner-direction looks easier to achieve than autonomy today." In other words, Riesman finds that autonomy is more difficult for middle-class Americans to achieve today than it was for them in the nineteenth century and, once achieved, is more difficult to exercise.

The Lonely Crowd, then, is a thoroughly pessimistic and denigrating book. If autonomy has declined in the American middle classes with the rise of other-direction, this means nothing less than the progressive loss of meaningful freedom for us. Mr. Riesman

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has evidently concluded that the phase of rising other-direction has brought with it an increasing inability on our part to act creatively and to respond as individuals to the creative acts of others. We have been told, kindly and dispassionately, that we are in the process of losing just those things that provide whatever dignity and pride there is in being a human being, just those things that make life worth living. And we have also been told that there is really very little that we can do about this situation of spreading deterioration.

III

One of the most striking aspects of the system of thought developed in *The Lonely Crowd* is that the dominant character types described must follow each other in a fixed order in time. Inner-direction can only follow tradition-direction as a conformity pattern, not precede it, and other-direction can only follow them both. This is due to the forces that Mr. Riesman describes as bringing about the rise in turn of inner- and other-direction. Tradition-direction was displaced by inner-direction, according to him, because by the late Renaissance new medical knowledge, new frontiers of production, and an increasing food supply had caused a decline in the death rate, an expanding population, greater mobility of that population, and rapidly changing ways of life. Other-direction in its turn has begun to oust inner-direction, especially among the urban middle classes in the United States, because in the later stages of industrial development problems of consumption have begun to outweigh those of production in maintaining a going economy, and because highly developed urban industrialism sets the stage for incipient population decline.

These forces, which according to Riesman have produced his three conformity types, have also produced kinds of society that so far have had a nonreversible order in time. A society increasing its scientific knowledge and expanding its modern industrial production has not yet been known to revert to an agrarian-based village culture. A society which has achieved the advanced industrial level at which consumption problems outweigh those of production has

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not, so far, returned to the phase of primary concern with problems of production, nor to that of a relatively static village culture. It is altogether possible that something of this sort may occur in the future, but such a possibility has no relevance to Riesman's thesis.

The significance for the critic of this aspect of Mr. Riesman's system is that if one could find an important segment of Western society that was both preindustrial and predominantly other-directed, two objects would be accomplished. First, it would show that other-direction, as Riesman describes it, has no necessary causal relation to an over-all social situation of incipient population decline. Second, it would show that the forces generated in a highly developed industrial economy are not the primary causes of other-direction. To accomplish the first object is not very important because other critics have already successfully challenged Riesman's population theory and because, in any case, it is not vital to his position. It is much more important to accomplish the second object because this would narrow the explanation of other-direction to consumption-orientation, which would in turn endanger the central thesis of *The Lonely Crowd*.

Before searching for an early example of other-direction, some of the major features of this pattern described by Mr. Riesman should be recalled. The other-directed person is one whose life is geared to the opinions of influential others. He is an "antagonistic co-operator" with his peers. His environment is urban and leisured. In fact, the separation between his work and his play has become blurred. One of his major traits is his tendency to treat large areas of his experience as a consumer would consumables. Politics, work, leisure, food, even sex, are considered less for their contribution to keeping production going than they are as items for consumption. The material abundance with which the other-directed person is surrounded makes possible rapid changes in consumer taste, and the resulting speedy obsolescence not only of material items of consumption, but also styles of behavior. In this situation advancement depends as much on personality and social skills as it does on job competency. One of the most important results for other-directed people is that they develop flexibility, rather than fixity, of character and purpose.

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An early example of other-directed society which exhibits all of these traits once existed in Europe. It developed prior to the emergence of the mass media and before the factory system had grown to dominance. I am speaking of court societies on the Continent during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially of Versailles and its many imitators, where permanent retinues of courtiers had grown large and where an increasingly debt-ridden nobility had come more and more to depend on the court's favor. Such societies were "mixed," of course, in the same sense that Riesman would describe middle-class American society today as being mixed. That is, character types other than other-directed could be found in them. Continental court societies contained both seasonal and independent provincial aristocrats who were in but not of the court, and others whose careers had been open to middle- and lower-class talent. These groups might to a greater or lesser degree escape the encroachments of other-direction.

But, generally, in these Continental court societies, one's life was geared to the opinions of influential others. One's career depended upon the skill with which peers were manipulated. The court environment was urban and leisured. Work and play were often identical for all practical purposes. An important aspect of such court societies was the intense concern with styles of leisure and consumption that animated them. Food, work, leisure, sex, even politics, were sometimes considered as items of consumption. The rapid obsolescence of material items of consumption and of styles of behavior is easily discernible in these court societies. One has only to invoke the rapidity with which fads in clothing, entertainments, mistresses, and styles of connoisseurship in the arts replaced each other, and the speed with which old favorites were cast into disgrace and replaced by meteoric new ones. Success often depended on the ease with which one could develop flexibility of character and purpose. In such courts other-directed character traits appear in something approaching purity.

Maybe it shouldn't be necessary to belabor this point as I have done, because I am not alone in discovering other-direction in segments of aristocratic European society. Mr. Riesman has also on occasion said that he believes this to be so. In *The Lonely Crowd*

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he only hints at it, calling the upper classes of the past "the precursers of modern other-directed types." But in an earlier essay, since included in his recently published *Individualism Reconsidered,* Riesman was much more explicit:

> We can find exemplars of the other-directed character in leisured urban circles of the past, where the preoccupations were those of consumption, not production, and where status depended on the opinion of influential others. What is new is the spread of such outlook over large sectors of a middle class that was once inner-directed. Elements of this outlook, moreover, have now filtered down in America to many members of the lower-middle class.

It is evident from these three sentences that if Mr. Riesman was not specifically assigning other-directed traits to the court circles I have in mind, he was at least including them among past aristocratic groups in general. In the preface of *The Lonely Crowd,* too, though less directly than in the passage above, Riesman focuses the explanation of other-direction on consumption-orientation. There he says that the other-directed American is "the forerunner of a type of whom we shall see more. For he bespeaks a western urban world in which, with growing economic abundance, work has lost its former importance and one's peers educate one in the proper attitudes toward leisure and consumption—indeed, in which politics and work become, in a sense, consumables." In explaining such statements and, more importantly, in explaining the presence of other-direction in past court societies, it becomes clear that the cause of this conformity pattern lies not in changes in population statistics nor in the pressures generated in a highly industrialized economy, but in economic abundance and the kind of consumption made possible by that abundance.

IV

If abundance and leisure in a social group explain the presence of other-direction in it, one must then ask whether these things in turn are sufficient to inhibit autonomy. For if they are not, whatever our present cultural ills, other-direction cannot be said to be the cause of them.

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It should be apparent at the outset that the other-directed Continental court societies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not inhibit creativity. Many of these courts were centers for creative judgment in politics, in thought, in art and in connoisseurship. Many both served as audience for and participants in the creation of high culture. It doesn't serve Riesman to argue that most of the men of talent at such courts had risen from the middle or lower classes, for he believes that the American middle classes today are a mixture of character types. Mr. Riesman might argue, as he has, that today other-directed Americans suffer from a confusion of standards of taste, in the absence of aristocratic models. But this could hardly be caused by other-direction. We have seen that in the past many members of the upper-classes have themselves been other-directed.

I think it is possible to claim more for consumption-oriented societies than that they establish no impenetrable barriers against autonomy. There is also good reason to assign to them the positive merit that they are essential if high standards of creativity are to be maintained. This claim has been advanced already by T. S. Eliot in his *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture.*

In this book Eliot argues quite forcefully that to maintain a going tradition of high culture in a society requires that a group within it has the abundance and leisure to spend a great deal of time and energy in consuming and judging the products of individual talents. This is the only way that a generalized standard of high culture can be understood and transmitted from generation to generation. The individual man of talent may himself be a specialist whose taste in general may not be highly developed.

Eliot's over-all view in *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture,* however, is similar to Riesman's in suggesting that our period is one of decline. He also feels that the only group that can properly fulfill the function of transmitting high cultural standards is a hereditary aristocracy. In these beliefs I am unable to follow him; but I do accept his view that a leisured social group of consumers is necessary for the transmission of high culture and consider this view to be highly relevant to a discussion of Riesman's work.

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This aspect of Eliot's position is significant for a discussion of Riesman's work because here Eliot affirms that consumer-orientation in at least some portion of society is both valuable and necessary for creativity of a very high order. If such creativity does not signify what Riesman describes as autonomy, then any decline in that autonomy cannot be the sign of a serious deterioration of culture. Stated in another way, Eliot's view affirms that great poets demand great audiences or, in Riesman's more general terms, that adept producers require adept consumers. Consumption-orientation and other-direction need not inhibit autonomy and creativity, as Riesman's analysis would lead us to believe. These qualities may instead be essential for the maintenance of high standards of creativity.

In this context the marginal differentiation of products that marks our economy today, and about which Mr. Riesman exhibits housewifely concern in *The Lonely Crowd,* may have a quite different meaning than he suggests. Objects that have slight or even spurious differences in a practical, economic sense may be aesthetically different in very important senses. The central act of connoisseurship lies just in this making of discriminations between objects which, to the unaware, have no discernible differences in value.

Skilled connoisseurship is a necessity in Eliot's group of consumers of high culture if high standards are to be maintained. As we have seen in court societies of the past, this is part of a way of life in which not only the arts and sciences are subjected to the connoisseur's examination, but also most items of consumption, the whole realm of manners, and the very styles of life. This development of connoisseurship is the major creative function of such a group. While the increased awareness of style and the setting of it that is engendered may produce some of the conformity pressures of the *salon,* it also requires continuous autonomous judgments in which the taste follower of one moment may become the taste leader of the next.

The Lonely Crowd abounds with evidence that such connoisseurship is vastly on the increase among the urban middle classes

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in the United States today. In fact it is just such acts of connoisseurship in food, clothing, dress, sex, housing and entertainment that Riesman seems most to criticize. Perhaps he has done this because he has seen in them evidence merely of peer group rivalry. But both the rivalry and the connoisseurship may also tend to make possible finer aesthetic discriminations between objects and styles of life, and in general a greater consciousness of culture. Consumer-orientation in American society today may in these senses offer positive encouragement for autonomy.

V

If other-direction does not necessarily cause a decline in autonomy, Mr. Riesman's main thesis is not tenable, yet autonomy still may have declined. If creativity and individualism have diminished in our society, this may be true for reasons other than the rise of consumption-orientation and other-direction. But the very failure of Mr. Riesman's thesis to be finally convincing is in itself evidence that to show a serious decline of creativity in our society would take a lot of proving.

On the other hand, there is impressive evidence to the contrary. For example, Frederick G. Kilgour, in a recent article in the *Yale Review*, has shown that since 1901 our scientists have in each successive decade been receiving a larger and larger portion of the Nobel Prize. Such critics as Clement Greenberg and Henri Peyre have pointed out that recently American painters and writers have, instead of remaining the imitators of Europeans, increasingly been imitated by them. That is, our artists and writers have been able to do more, under present social conditions, than to remain simply provincial. Another impressive example of this development is that of the New York City Center Ballet, which has developed on practically virgin territory American audiences, American performers, and American choreographers for an art which was almost unknown to this country as late as 1920.

Of course, such examples cover only a very narrow band in the social spectrum, and they prove very little other than that present social conditions in the United States have not posed an impene-

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trable barrier against creativity for a portion of our population. There is not space here to attempt to prove more than this. In any case, the point is not to prove that we are or are not creative and individualistic as a society, but that creativity does not decline deterministically with the rise of consumer-orientation and other-direction. Though I do not believe it, our society may be increasingly hostile to much that is best in men. But if this is so, it is not for the reasons that Mr. Riesman has given us.

VI

It would actually be unfair to Mr. Riesman to treat *The Lonely Crowd* as if it represents his fixed intellectual position. In the opening pages of *Individualism Reconsidered*, he has said that his present attitude toward American society differs from his earlier one in being more sanguine, and this is evident in the development of his work. His present position is in fact sufficiently different from that expressed in *The Lonely Crowd* as to undermine substantial portions of that book. Nevertheless, in this article I feel justified in concentrating my criticism on *The Lonely Crowd* because the theme of the decline of autonomy was a central element in Riesman's position then and because his influence as a thinker has been so generally identified with this theme.

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Portions of a Letter from Russia

MORRIS L. ERNST

May 19, 1956

Dear Folks:

Here is my, as usual, close-the-trip letter. In some ways, it's best to write while in the middle or on top of a scene; but when it comes to a complex like Russia, a little distance in time and space may give perspective. It is difficult enough to get at the truth in a society in which no one is afraid to talk; but imagine a search where people are not allowed free travel and free speech. How much of the inefficiency I found was due to ignorance and how much to fear I'll never know.

No American visits a Russian home *ever*. This is partly due to fear, partly due to the fact that every Russian living room is full of beds. Of course, there are only eighteen Americans living in all of Russia, outside of the embassy staff and their families. The eighteen include all our reporters, their wives, children and nurses. Norton, of the *Baltimore Sun*, is bringing over his wife, three children and nurse (when he gets an apartment), making the total twenty-three. This group will then make up one-fifth of the total. As to the embassy, it lives in a semi-compound, a horrible building, though admired by Russians because it is tall; but here the staff of fifty (it should be much larger, note Russian staff of eight hundred in tiny Ethiopia) with families, resides and works in an isolation which extends even to the children meeting Russian children. Russia won't let us buy other land to build a really symbolic building as we have

✪ Lawyer and author of many works on civil liberties, MORRIS ERNST has been sent abroad on various governmental missions. It was in relation to his work as special counsel to the American Newspaper Guild, the Dramatists Guild, and the Authors League of America that Mr. Ernst went into Russia in the spring of 1956.

The material published here is extracted from a much longer letter which Mr. Ernst wrote to his family and friends immediately following his tour of the U.S.S.R. The section on Russian schools was written by his wife, MARGARET ERNST.

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done in Sweden and Denmark. Incidentally, the less democracy there is, the more people live by symbols. And we are not too good at this because of the Madison Avenue hucksters who can only create symbols for tangibles and not for things of the spirit.

This culture of fear in no way resembled Italy as I saw it under Mussolini, Mexico during the revolution which we purposely attended, any of the lands of the East, Egypt under Farouk, or Morocco, et cetera. Maybe a point of departure is that all the books and files of Russia are being rewritten. This is not in quality like the publication of our interpretation of the Yalta papers, which, as you recall, seemed like a different conference to the British who were also there. Above all, the area for search is limited by the language barrier and the limitation on travel imposed by the government against even its own people. It's as if an inhabitant of the United States had to get permission to move from Alabama to New York. We ran into one man who moved to Moscow, didn't get a job and was fined five rubles a day for overstaying his leave.

The people individually were friendly and bemused by us. They did not follow us outside of the hotel or even examine our baggage on the way in or out. They "love children and music"! But I've yet to see a culture in which people do not love their children or music. Of course, where people have little else to boast of they are apt to emphasize that "we love children," "we are contemplative," and so on. It's like saying of a man that "he's good to his mother."

We saw a great ballet, well carried on in the czarist tradition; but I believe that a small segment of the Moscow public sees ballet, opera, that is, gets to any musical performance, as compared to the crowds in Denmark, for example, who for seven cents or less hear music of all kinds—orchestral, choral, et cetera. The total attendance at operas and concerts in Moscow or Leningrad, assuming no audience repetition, involves only a minimum number of people. It's like people saying that they love New York because of the opera—but ask them when they last went to the opera! The audience at the opera and ballet is a distinct class, very different from the types we saw in the May Day parade. (The parade which, by the way, we watched from our hotel looking out on the Kremlin,

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was carried out without any audience other than grandstand V.I.P.'s. Imagine a parade on Fifth Avenue with only a few watching.) These audiences certainly look and dress differently. The one at the Isaac Stern concert was a great relief. Its general appearance, even the hair styles, indicated a different breed, as in fact it was, rich and sophisticated to an extent.

As a footnote: It seemed as if a preferred class of big income was the coatroom women and men, who in most places get tips (unlike other employees) and are treated not as menials, as are most of the other employees of hotels and restaurants. (In every restaurant, theater, museum, you *must* check your coat, no matter how chilly—a form of Russian boondoggling?) The service group in Sweden, Denmark and Austria, many not operating on a tip basis, seemed to have a certain dignity in their jobs. In Russia we could spot a difference in manner—that is, the mustached old men, porters and the like (all born before 1920) who did not demean themselves (in the popular but incorrect sense of the word) by waiting on people.

I don't want to write the kind of material you have all read so I'll try a different approach.

We landed in Moscow at midnight, unexpected, the airport about to close. We didn't have to sleep at the airport, even dirtier than Idlewild and not nearly so neat and clean as those in Thailand, Benares, Jerusalem or Karachi. A friendly German-speaking Russian guide finally took us in tow. At this airport you can't just walk out and get a taxi. You live in a coupon world, thirty dollars a day per person for four meals, big auto, interpreter and hotel. It is a lot of money, but if you got what is represented it wouldn't be too bad, particularly since the ruble, pegged at four to the dollar, is really eight to ten to the dollar when compared with the hotel prices to Russians as shown on menus. But on the train from Moscow to Leningrad, an orange cost four rubles—one dollar to me—and there were no oranges at hotels in Leningrad; the only fruit was apples, a tidbit of interest but of no importance even to thirty-dollar-a-day travelers.

Another limiting factor for freedom is the static immobility of the nation. Travel is by order, permit or in groups; for the people of Russia there is no general right to roam. We could have gone to

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Kiev, Odessa, Kharkov and Rostov, but as Maggie can't travel in unpressurized planes we were limited to a Moscow train (very good, clean sleeper; no food) to Leningrad. It will be thirty years before these people become mobile and thirty years before they can get even to the bicycle age. There are only about two months a year when you can go by car from Moscow to Odessa. The roads, except for a few military ones, are as impassable as this country's were in 1776, when Patrick Henry said that the hero is the man who can best fix the gullies. Imagine the drain on the national economy when people are allowed to roam—roads can consume at least 5 per cent of the national income. This burden may be one of the reasons for enforced immobility.*

Another factor limiting knowledge arises from the desire for privacy—which also probably grows out of fear. There are no maps of Moscow, Leningrad or Russia for sale; telephone books or directories are not easily available. One Russian rationalized, dishonestly I think, "Why should anyone have my telephone number? I'll give it to my friends. Why deprive me of this remaining bit of privacy?" This does not stem from the same motives as our private listing.

As to transportation, there are only three types of autos. These are priced at 14,000, 40,000 and 70,000 rubles (in dollars at four to one—$3,500, $10,000, $17,000). The highest in price, used only for important visitors and high functionaries, is fully curtained as a symbol of power or for protection.

The food you know about, and it is not too important. We didn't like it and lived on caviar, omelets, soups and our own powdered coffee. Of course, we couldn't spend money; we lived a ticketed life, paid for in advance. We were a nuisance compared to the great number of group tours from England and everywhere—twenty in a group, ten dollars a day, with guide-interpreter, bus, food and lodging. There are only three hotels where we could live or eat. We spent the first night in the worst, several notches below the New Bedford hotel of thirty-five years ago in cleanliness and

* The pressure for better roads has become so great, I am told, that plans have been issued since my departure.

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service. It was only by threat and showing correspondence with high officials that we were moved.

The iron curtain has miserable effects on Russian life. One little example—hair-styling is cheap, about twenty-four rubles for a permanent, which means that it is encouraged by the government; but hair styles are as distorted as most knowledge that man learns by word of mouth. The hair is fuzzy and frizzed, as if the beauty-parlor operators learned without seeing the original. (I was reminded of a shower bath in Orizaba, Mexico, in 1926, where the shower was located in a twenty-foot-square room topped with a twenty-foot ceiling which had a hole for water flow, and a rail to hold on to because of violence of flow. I realized that the owner copied a description of an American shower bath.) So much of Russia is on this level. Thus the difference between Moscow, or even gracious, beautifully planned Leningrad, and Stockholm, for example, is far greater than the gap between India and Hong Kong —despite the absence in Moscow of great numbers of the maimed, the crippled and blind, so heart-rending in the Orient. (There were many legless men, however, on crutches; we saw few artificial limbs.) And still it was more comfortable for us to live in the filth of an open-minded Indian town than in a barricaded Russia.

Another element of immobility is the lack of individual privacy within the home. Our good-looking, intelligent interpreter in Leningrad, who had lived for three years in Stockholm, now shares four rooms with her family of ten. She, her parents and grandmother have two rooms. It is difficult to know what this assault on privacy does emotionally and sexually, leaving aside the less important sharing of one kitchen by three families, which is common. I do not analogize this to the one-pump village culture prevalent all over the world. These slums are apartments, and our friend and most of her family had good incomes, she earning 1,200 rubles a month. (The Russian average is said to be 600 rubles a month.) Of course, no statistics are reliable and certainly of no comparative value. And still a pair of good sturdy shoes costs 300 rubles, and a suit or coat 700 rubles.

But the freeze on knowledge and the use of politically manu-

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factured statistics (the new Five-Year Plan proposes for the first time a cost-accounting system—a technique of vast future significance) lead to all articles appearing in all department stores at identical prices on the same day. Of course, *all* business is government owned and operated except the one run by the women who sell flowers on the street; and they are chased by the police. We spent a lot of time in stores, including the fine bookstore in Leningrad. But the revolution the Russians are not ready for is one of variety in design and taste. Raymond Loewy or Henry Dreyfuss, given free rein, would drive B & K out of office. Hence, the price structure represents commissar intention rather than public expression of favor. Thus, washing machines and television sets are cheap compared to food or clothing. Also, the designs of furniture, lampshades, dishwashers, and other such items are as tasteless as all the manufactured products in Russia. The absence of public reaction to design creates a great economic burden on the economy. The waste of labor and material is striking, particularly since the main tax is a turnover sales tax valid only where all incomes are the same. In other words, there is none of the competition in design or taste, the choice, which is the essence of criticism and, hence, of change or improvement.

I saw several profound dents on this way of life. For example, the elite—every university graduate elected to the Academy gets 5,000 rubles a month—can't now spend their money. A composer of a song—a jingle—received 2 million rubles. After spending 70,000 on a car, and, by a wangle, 250,000 on a home and 200,000 to furnish it—he had no use for the balance. No items are available to buy and, of course, there are no investments. Such folk are a pressure for taste and variety. I ate with commissars at our hotel, and the food was surprising—varied and edible even on our terms and far better than the English-boardinghouse Indian-hotel diet, or even British food before the great improvement it underwent following the influx of war refugees from the Continent.

It's this new upper-income group that deserves watching. Their children are the core of the juvenile delinquent problem. The young technicians and teachers earning 1,500 rubles a month frequent the Metropole—a dinner-dance, hotel room—and a couple

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spends 100 rubles for dinner for two, not to mention the night clubs in which a meal costs 100 rubles or $25 a person.

A more serious implication is that if a boy does not make the university or a degree he is *assigned* to a factory, industry or a farm. There is no choice; his income is 300 to 600 rubles a month instead of a possible 5,000. For this frustration and defeat, the blame is no longer put entirely on the government; and hence, for the first time, I think, some people blame themselves and look to their own shortcomings. Here is a departure from the caste system of today—varied in the past only in government positions of upper rank, and a few isolated preferred and appointed groups such as coatroom women and the rich ones who sell programs at opera or ballet.

Out of this trend away from a caste system and toward a "just" society, frustrations will appear. Already suicide and attempted suicide, unlike those during purges or brought on by physical infirmities, are mentioned. If you don't get an apartment you want, you need not blame yourself—like not inheriting wealth in our culture. But failing an exam is different, for prestige goes with passing it. The government seems aware of the problem, as well as its corollary, drunkenness—so prevalent that "recovery centers" have been set up. To get in or out of one of these centers due process is not available. In fact, I am at a loss to conceive of law in Russia. It's as if our worst administrative agencies operated *without* any capacity on the part of the public to appeal to a court. The quantity of appeal is irrelevant in our land so long as the right to appeal acts as the corrective. I find no corrective in any aspect of Russian law and, despite all the recent pardons, I find no addition of a concept to deter a repetition of purges next year or tomorrow.

There are two political ideas which may interest you. As you know, our "line" after the Stalin uprooting was "Keep your guard up"—a useless approach in Russia and boring after a week outside of Russia—and "Why didn't you believe us, we told you he was a gangster?"—a stupid technique for persuading other folk. The "I told you so" approach of Dulles is futile. The approach which will disturb in Russia is one we can explain in simple terms:

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The test of political freedom, as distinguished from personal, is a two-party system. The sparring of Russians when I opened up on this was illuminating and carried a faint retort, "Our party is expansive enough to permit all criticism and conflict to be resolved in the party." To which I replied, "Then if you are so sure, why are you afraid to permit an opposition party?" The story of Attaturk in Turkey and his fomentation of an opposition party which became the dominant one disturbed them still more.

The other facet has to do with collaboration. I have always doubted my own bravery if I lived in an occupied land such as France under Hitler or in Russia. B & K collaborated: their excuse was that there was a gun at their backs and that they desired to be around to prevent debacle when Stalin dropped off. The Hitler collaborationists, whom we saw at Nuremberg, had no such rationale; they suggested that they stayed with Hitler to reduce the terror under Hitler. On this *distinction* a United States position could rest. Surely we should, as our labor has done, ask Communist party leaders in France, Italy, et cetera, why did you collaborate, you had no gun at your back? Pollitt, Communist leader out in England, points to my thesis. *Note*: External Communists have endured worse—purges, pacts and the like—and getting rid of Stalin may remove a problem in the way of a new united front.

This is too long and still too scant a letter. There is one sign of great hope. Mike Todd took over by seduction the government of Russia with special food, planes, et cetera. He was fabulous and improbable. He, unlike a government official, having no enduring responsibility, knew that only the fantastic and improbable could find an excited response in the dictators of Russia. I'm not suggesting that he be employed in our foreign service; but when he can get immediately a special visa for a girl friend to fly out of Paris to Moscow because he's lonely, the Todd psychology is worth studying. The willingness to give whatever he wants for a picture—seven thousand horses, forty thousand soldiers, the use of gracious Leningrad, any relics—deserves a study by the State Department not as to merits of co-operation but on the psychology which brings the response. That he telephoned to bring in by special plane cases of liquor for a party he gave for forty people is only a symbol, not

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an evidence as to means of seduction. This episode, which I observed firsthand, is one of the odd hopeful signs I saw on how to find weaknesses in the armor of the hierarchy.

I went over to get an exchange of books; but on that I shall write a separate letter for authors and publisher friends. If the Russians do what they promised I will be surprised but highly satisfied. At the moment, their picture of the present-day United States is through Maltz and Fast, and of the past, Jack London and Mark Twain. I have been promised a full list of American books published in Russia. On the reciprocal side, the heads of Foreign Language Publishing Company and VOKS were not at all concerned that thousands of dollars of royalties are lying in our land earmarked for Russian authors and unclaimed. No one dared ask for the money or about it. This dichotomy arose in a talk with a high official who said: "You need no contract—publish any Russian work —no royalty." I said: "But we really believe in authors; we won't steal even from Russian authors. You steal from our authors and encourage us to steal from yours."* That kind of tough talk, I think, created interest.

Two more items that may not bore you. I have seen our foreign reporters in twenty different nations. I start with a deep prejudice in favor of reporters in general. I must say that I found the situation in Moscow disturbing. The fact that there are only about a dozen, including those from magazines, radio, television and press, creates a kind of intellectual compound which reduces the ordinary competitive efforts for scoops, and these people *have* to live together isolated in Moscow. Outside of the receipt of the airmail edition of the *New York Times*, they are writing without any up-to-date reaction as to whether anything they have cabled has been printed, and what the editorial and correspondence-column reactions have been. As you know, this is an iron curtain of our making because of our high airmail postage rates. It is a simple situation to remedy, since newspapers and magazines are subsidized through our Post-Office budget and through airline subsidies to the extent of more than 200 million dollars a year. All we have to do is to provide that

* I have been advised recently that dollar-royalty book contracts are now being signed with satellite countries.

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any citizen outside our borders can get any printed material, paying the full postage rates of shipment by boat and rail but receiving it by air. Then it will take an average of twelve days for the reporters to be informed about events, opinion and reaction at home instead of six weeks.

Furthermore, as elsewhere, there is something basically wrong. Our foreign reporters work at the bottom of a pyramid on the top of which their employers say they need, at the most, two or three people informed on foreign matters. This state of affairs creates a reluctance on the part of the reporters to come back home and find themselves, of necessity, reduced to reporting murder cases and the like. I would urge the State Department and big business to look for its much needed informed help among those reporters who don't want to stay abroad any longer but do so because of the economic and prestige debacle they face at home. Many stay abroad, deteriorating as human beings and in their skills. In addition, I have a hunch that too much of the time of the reporters in Moscow is being spent as legmen to answer specific questions from the home office. Too few are doing that thoughtful kind of digging which can illumine the shifts and trends in the rapidly changing culture of Russia. To be sure, the kind of material that the thoughtful ones are developing does not particularly fit into our definition of "current news." This is the defense of the publishers. It is my guess that the reporting out of Moscow is far inferior to that of India, Hong Kong or Egypt.

A few more final tidbits on Russia.

There are seven thousand newspapers, weeklies and dailies, all printing the same material. We have only ten thousand newspapers left in our evaporating diversity.

Their ears are close to their heads and don't spread out like the Swedes'. The men are three inches shorter, I'll bet, than our people.

Churches are open, but there is nobody there under forty years of age because of the social pressure against attendance for the young.

Postal cards cost thirty cents apiece.

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They will never make it a crime to listen to our radio, but they are still spending fortunes on jamming the waves.

Up to now it has been a caste society. Now, for the first time, frustrations—familiar only in noncaste social structures—are developing. I am still of the opinion that they will attempt to synthesize Marx and Freud.

A Note on Russian Schools

I visited two schools in Moscow: a kindergarten with children aged three to six, and one of the new ten-year schools for the seven- to seventeen-year-olds. In both schools, life-size portraits of Stalin were still hanging in the entrance halls. I asked the principal of the ten-year school about this, and he answered that no directive had come ordering the pictures down, so he used his own discretion. He said that the children were told that Stalin, up to a certain date, was a great hero and leader, and that after that date he was ill and not responsible for the change in himself. Morris' guess is that de-sainting will be pegged from 1934.

The kindergarten was superb in atmosphere and equipment, run by a kindly, elderly woman who obviously understood kids. She spoke almost no English, and I no Russian, but as fellow teachers we were *en rapport*. The building, in a new industrial section some miles from the center of Moscow, surrounded by modern housing, factories, and leftover log-cabin slums, was two-storied, not new, set in big grounds with trees, playhouses, garden plots, jungle gyms, a small outdoor puppet show stage. When we arrived, about two, all the children were asleep—and I mean *all*—on glassed-in sleeping porches, in iron beds which were made up with clean sheets, blankets, pillows. Each child wore a hooded blue or yellow sleeping bag over a nightgown. Clothes were neatly folded on kindergarten chairs. The kids looked rosy and well. It was remarkable to see even the six-year-olds sound asleep—by the time they become this age, our children are too excited to nap.

The school was divided into four large rooms, with many windows in each, plants, a squirrel in a cage in one. The equipment

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was marvelous—movable tables, well-built wooden trains, trucks, et cetera. There were large building blocks, perforated with round holes about one and a half inches in diameter into which short dowel sticks fitted, for constructing many things—sort of an enlarged Meccano set. Unfortunately, the children did not freely use these blocks with imagination, but were directed by the teacher to make things according to instructions in a manual. One end of each room was raised about two feet, with steps going up, and here were kept great quantities of dolls, furniture, and so forth. But it was all too neat, and there was no evidence of free use of the toys.

There are one hundred children in this school, with a teacher and an assistant for each twenty-five. The hours are 7:30 to 7:30, the mother leaving the child on her way to work and picking him up *after* her home supper. The school is open twelve months.

When the children woke up, they came in quietly, undressed, from the porch—the nudity of boys and girls is taken as a matter of course—dressed themselves, and then started to play very quietly. Some drew pictures with pencil or crayon on small sheets of paper, there being no poster paints; and some put together picture-puzzles. It was unfortunate that the visit was arranged at naptime (just like Intourist inefficiency) so that I couldn't see the full activity. I had a feeling that the fine equipment was used only under direction—it was all too orderly, with everything put away.

One charming tidbit we could copy: Each child's locker, cubbyhole and cup were marked not with a name (since they don't read) but with a symbol such as a rabbit, squirrel, et cetera.

Although there are no rhythms or dancing, no pianos, the children sing and give small plays. In the warm weather, they sunbathe outdoors, naked, on blankets, during rest period.

When a baby is four to six weeks old—as soon as the mother can go back to work—he is in a nursery all day, sometimes all week, seeing his parents only on Sunday or Monday, whatever free day they have. This takes care of the kids from birth to three, when they go to kindergarten.

As I told you, I visited one of the newly set up ten-year-schools for youngsters aged seven to seventeen. These are part of Russia's next Five-Year Plan. At present most schooling stops at fourteen,

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except for the lucky ones with high I.Q.'s who pass exams for higher education. These adolescents are then directed into industry or farming, and life becomes grim. Their faces show it. Schools in the past have not been coeducational. This is being changed now; but the school I visited is still largely for boys, although girls are gradually being integrated from another school. Boys all over Russia wear the same uniform—dark gray, semi-military blouses and cap. Girls wear their own dresses with black aprons. The kids everywhere were friendly and interested. When I left, two little girls of about eight ran up and presented me with a handkerchief they had embroidered. They all wanted to try out their English.

The school I saw is one of the best, I gather; one in which English is taught from the beginning, with a forty-minute period every day. When I talked to the older boys, I decided that a good job had been done. Maybe the next generation of Intourist interpreters will be better!

The school building was dark, four-storied, chilly, depressing, with drab walls and no art work up except pictures of Stalin and various honor rolls, charts and the like. It was about like P. S. 41 on Greenwich Avenue. Although there was plenty of outdoor play space, it was muddy in May, and there was no equipment. However, they do play indoor basketball. Some kids were planting garden-plots; another group, in gym bloomers, was going through old-style calisthenics with an instructor. I saw no running around and yelling, as our children do or as the Swedish children did.

The classes were strict and formal—outdated fixed desks, two to a seat; boys rose to recite; between classes, they marched almost silently. The science labs had almost no modern equipment, only Bunsen burners, and I saw no evidence that they were used. There was no equipment out, no experiment in progress. There was, however, a school radio station with broadcasting machinery.

The educational technique seemed very old-fashioned, all out of textbooks—no learn-by-doing. To my surprise, there was no shop, no cooking class, no dancing, no music, no painting. I had thought that the Russians would do these creative things well. After several requests, I was reluctantly shown the art work—mechanical drawing, small imitative designs, copying. No paints, no

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big paper, though the children do paint scenery when they give plays. Children use old-fashioned pens and ink-wells from the beginning, and learn, for use in English, Spencerian writing.

I asked to see the library, which was locked, and there was a great to-do about finding the key. The librarian was ill, the principal said. (He was a nice man.) There was a small reading room with four or five round tables (the school has over six hundred pupils) and then a stack room. I asked to see the books in English—Dickens, Scott, Mark Twain, Jack London, Howard Fast, Albert Maltz, a number of antiquated English primers and readers with dull illustrations, dating from the early part of the century. I wish Russian children could get an idea of America from some of our wonderful children's books.

One teacher, when asked, said they do not teach hatred of other countries, such as the United States—just that the political and economic systems are different and inferior!

Men teach in the upper grades, women in the lower, just as here.

We saw the children in the lunchroom, a cafeteria, one ruble for a lunch consisting of a salad of coleslaw and beets, black bread, no butter, tea, some sort of sweet buns. They sat around tables for six, and talked busily, relaxed.

Our lovely Leningrad interpreter told us that before the Revolution only 10 per cent of the population could read and write. Now, except for old people like her grandmother, 90 per cent can. So I guess they've achieved a miracle, though they've got a long way to go in terms of Western education—that is, the best American education. (Some of our schools have a long road, too).

* * *

We must stop somewhere, though I have not run through all my notes, and much of the above should have been elaborated. We picked up just one good story, to be uttered with proper inflection: "Lenin-Marxist; Stalin-Sadist; Bulganin-Intourist."

Love to all,

Pop

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The State

DON GORDON

The house when weather-proof for man
Was still exposed to fear:
He envied the mollusc, sea-crazed,
Concealed in its locked shell.

He set the carnivorous plant,
Calm as an angel, in the hall:
It would eat insects gladly,
Devour small animals for nitrogen,
Or strangle thieves, or neighbors.

Tenderly it moved along the wall.
Casual leaves across the windows
Kept him safe from foreign eyes.
All it wanted first was water,
Then from time to time blood-meal.

The house was free of flies and mice.
The roots walked later through the floor.
No one came in, no one came out,
Except the enemies in dreams.

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It went slowly into other rooms,
A mouth was hunting in the thicket:
It ate the light, it ate the air,
Grew fond of sons and then of daughters.

Who envied the mollusc in its shell,
Cornered now, reduced, and tongueless,
Prays in the attic for his father's ax.

✪ DON GORDON is the author of two books of poems, *Statement* and *Civilian Poems*. His work has appeared in a variety of national magazines. His third collection of poems, *Displaced Persons*, is to be published in the spring of 1957.

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History and Historical Novels

JAY WILLIAMS

SOME YEARS AGO, a novel of mine dealing with the German Peasants' War appeared in England. As is customary, my publisher sent copies to various outstanding people, among them an eminent historian at Oxford. Soon after, I received a letter from the don which I so carefully filed away in order to treasure it that I have been unable ever again to find it. The sense of it, however, was that he regretted to say he could not read my novel because he never read novels, being profoundly uninterested in the actions of unreal men and women, their trivial loves and hates, as opposed to the grander sweep of history itself. He ended, however, by inviting me to tea.

I am sorry now that I never went to tea with him, for Oxford teas are excellent. On the other hand, perhaps it is as well, for I should certainly have had the same bitter dispute with him that I have had with many other professional historians—a dispute based on the assumption that the historical novelist is essentially a dilettante, a parvenu and, what is worse, a popularizer of a dignified and esoteric science. I think it is high time that the relative positions of the historical novelist and the professional historian were defined, and a blow struck on behalf of the novelist.

Roughly speaking, the rather amused contempt of the historian for the novelist can be divided into four main heads: the novelist is no more than a popularizer; he is frequently inaccurate in his presentation of true history; he deals with unreal rather than real human beings; and, finally, he is not serving the proper function of the study of history.

I have never really been able to find out what the proper func-

✪ JAY WILLIAMS has been a professional writer for the past fourteen years. Prior to this time he worked as a comedian, stage manager and theatrical press agent. He is the author of five historical novels for teen-agers, three historical novels for adults, and two works of nonfiction. He is currently at work on a novel which deals with Scotland in the sixteenth century.

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tion of the study of history is, since, like many aspects of history itself, there exists a certain amount of contradictory opinion. In the view of some historians with whom I have spoken, the end of history is to provide a guide for intelligent persons toward an analysis of their own times. For others, it is no more than the pursuit of pure knowledge, the discovery of certain facts that will tell as accurately as possible the story of the development of modern society out of the past.

The pursuit of pure knowledge is, of course, a most laudable enterprise. There is no more thrilling note than the baying of the hound on the trail of Queen Elizabeth's policy toward the young James VI, no more beaming face than that of a fewterer as he scoops into his horn some recently discovered letter from Wotton or Walsingham. The trouble is that these facts must be then put together by a man whose inclinations are more literary and philosophical than scientific, for, by and large, this is the nature of historians: they are rarely dispassionate and objective. They have become historians precisely because they are interested in humanity rather than in abstractions, and if they succeed in achieving utter detachment they become drier and drier, their vital juices evaporate, and like triumphant jellyfish that wish to be beached, they disappear altogether.

Few people would deny the stature of Janssen and von Ranke as historians. Both men dealt, more or less, with the same sets of facts, yet how widely different are their pictures of the Reformation in Germany. They might be talking about two totally different places: in Janssen's view, the Reformation led to a series of bloody demolitions of everything fine and good; while in von Ranke's opinion, it was the triumph of reason and justice. And when Zimmermann, a Socialist, enters the lists, the same material is reforged into a chain of proof for the doctrines of economic conflict. The quarrels and disagreements of historians are almost the only consistent thing in the study of history, unless it be the insipidity and inaccuracy with which the subject is taught in schools all the way to and sometimes through the university level. For essentially, the investigations and conclusions of modern historians ought to find their outlet in instruction, and yet, let them revise their thinking as they will, the average curriculum will continue to

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plod its old round. It is as difficult to disturb the set ways of pedagogy as it is to demolish the axiom: *Païens sont torts, et Chrétiens ont raison.* Professor F. M. Powicke said, in the massive *Cambridge Medieval History*, "It is beside the mark to regard Henry II as an imperial statesman and to try to trace in his acts a far-seeing, elaborate and consistent foreign policy, quite unnatural in the atmosphere of western feudalism." Yet a glance at any standard work, such as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, will turn up judgments like the one on Henry I, ". . . as a diplomatist he had shown surpassing skill. The chief triumphs of his foreign policy were the marriage of his daughter Matilda to the emperor Henry V which saved Normandy . . ."; or concerning Henry II, "Becket lent himself entirely to his master's ambitions which at this time centred round schemes of territorial aggrandizement . . ."; or on Henry III, ". . . he had neither the training nor the temper of a statesman. . . ."

In short, knowledge in this case, the case of history, is subject to interpretation. It is possible, on reading the household rolls of Edward II, to say that the king spent twenty-four shillings on his bodyguard of archers in one week; but it is not really possible, after reading all the material written about him and by him, to say what the king was actually thinking at any given time or to draw conclusions on his behalf as to the results of his behavior. It is just possible that Sir Winston Churchill represents the pinnacle of exasperation with such a state of affairs, and that in the future all historians will themselves have to be the men who make history. On the other hand, it is at least equally possible that Tolstoy was correct, rather than those professional historians who believe that great men "make" history, and that it is the indeterminate movement of masses of people which makes history while the behavior of their rulers is no more than the pale reflection of their turbulent stream. Indeed, considering Tolstoy's comprehension of human beings and the wide expanse of his intellect, it is conceivable that he could see further than many specialists whose horizons are limited and whose vision is correspondingly myopic.

It is only another form of myopia that makes people think the study of history is ever applied as a guide to modern decisions. For the most part, only as many of the speeches or deeds of past heroes are preserved as can be made to serve personal ends; it is a require-

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ment of politics that the founding fathers of any nation be translated into demigods, just as it is necessary to hagiology that the Caesars appear as monsters of infamy.

Ernest Belfort Bax, in his *German Society at the Close of the Middle Ages*, wrote: "It is the most difficult of all exercises of the imagination . . . to realize that the same words, names, customs and institutions connote totally different actualities in different stages of historic evolution. People fail to conjure up the altered perspective and the unfamiliar background in which men lived, thought and felt in another age. Agamemnon, 'King of Men,' is to them Kaiser Wilhelm differently made up. Lycurgus is a cross between Pitt and Dr. Johnson. Cicero is a Sir Charles Russell who happened to live in the first century B.C." In the sixty years or so since he wrote those lines, it would be a safe bet to say that at least once a month somebody has discovered absolute parallels between the dictatorship of Julius Caesar and that of Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Peron or Franklin D. Roosevelt, depending on the personal ax being ground at the moment.

If there were any hope whatever that men could learn by the precept of the past, we should by now be living in an age free from fear, war, national boundaries and the intrigues of statesmanship. The fact is that history is usually always distorted for opportunistic or chauvinistic ends. The view of any era or event is befogged by religious, political or national interests. And if this were not so, it is difficult to see how the present can be guided by the past, for an age in which the hydrogen bomb exists can hardly look for guidance to the *cataphracti*.

On the whole, perhaps the value of history is to provide as accurately as possible a chronicle of the lives of men for the entertainment and stimulation of their descendants. The serious historical novel does this. At the same time it may also be probing for the truth in a given period of history or drawing what parallels you like. That it may do this more eloquently and interestingly than even the best-written history book can be easily determined: thousands of people every year voluntarily lay out as much as four or five dollars for copies of books by Zoé Oldenbourg, Hope Muntz, Alfred Duggan, Margaret Irwin or Robert Graves. The real instructors in American history are writers like Kenneth Roberts,

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and more people have learned the particulars of the Civil War from MacKinlay Kantor or Bruce Lancaster than from Beard. Even the period of the Napoleonic Wars is now identified inalterably with Captain Horatio Hornblower.

If history is a record of the lives of men and women, then it ought to be given to men and women, to as many as possible; it ought, in short, to be popularized. It should, ideally, stress the actions and emotions of real persons; its emphasis should be removed from the policies of rulers and placed upon the much sounder and more fundamentally human base of birth, work, love and death. For after all, the account of a battle is only passingly interesting, but if you have a relative in that battle it becomes a matter of supreme importance.

It is true, of course, that the historical novelist cannot devote as much time to research in any given field as the specialist within the field. This does not necessarily imply that the novelist's research is either hasty or fragmentary, or that he himself is an illiterate boor, incapable of assimilating the vital details of a particular period. Novelists have often fretted under this goad. Many of them have taken the same bitter comfort from the words of Epictetus as I did when I was told that I could not possibly write a novel about medieval France because I couldn't speak medieval French: "When a man is proud because he can understand and explain the writings of Chrysippus, say to yourself, If Chrysippus had not written obscurely, this man would have had nothing to be proud of."

The fact is that the historical novelist is usually proud, and with good reason, of his research. Samuel Shellabarger, who was a writer as well as a member of the faculty of Princeton University and a Renaissance scholar, summed it up: "The author must become psychologically at home in his period. . . . The second kind of research deals with the externals of an epoch: its clothes, food, architecture, means of travel, roads, forms of address, customs and the like. Last . . . there is the historical research. Fiction must at times take small liberties with history, but it should never distort it. And the historical novelist must know all the recorded facts even if he disregards some of them."

In our day, however, the Universal Man has been supplanted by the Particular Man, with a corresponding snobbery on the part

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of specialists toward those who do not devote a lifetime to one aspect of a subject. But there do exist generalizers, or rather unifiers, whose aim is to draw on the work of a number of specialists in order to make larger, more universal points—theoretical physicists like Einstein belong to this category, as do analytical literary critics like Kenneth Burke and Stanley Edgar Hyman. In effect, so do historical novelists: they draw upon wide ranges of the work of specialists in the fields of folklore, anthropology, sociology, archaeology, linguistics, and history itself, in order to present the full background for a story in which a universal moral may also generally be embedded. In this way, Zoé Oldenbourg's *The Cornerstone* is a statement about the relationship of man to God, and Duggan's *The Conscience of the King* is an essay on both the corruption and the virtues of power. From this perspective, the serious historical novelist is really only an extension of the historian, just as the serious historian is a kind of frustrated historical novelist.

There is some basis for the charge that the novelist deals with unreal people—if, that is, one assumes that the personages in history are by contrast *real* people, something I have sometimes been inclined to doubt. For there is something shadowy and insubstantial about the great number of kings and statesmen who move through the pages of so many history books, omniscient, omnipotent, always fully aware of the results of their policies, always masters of their own and others' destinies. How bitterly unlike their solid descendants, the statesmen and rulers of modern times, whose fallibility and humanness is revealed in each day's newspapers! I suppose those historic kings and statesmen are, in some ways, as flimsy as the characters in some historical novels, and the emphasis that is put on the often pointless intrigues and endless battles that involve them resembles the emphasis some novelists give to the same things, with perhaps an eye on the box office.

In the field of the historical novel, there is the same percentage of pedestrian hacks as there is in the field of history; and for every serious work there appear a dozen ephemera, hopeful of cashing in on the public's perennial taste for costumes, swords and beds. Among the more reputable members of the tribe, however, are to be found the same professional ethics and standards as among any serious authors. The pressures of having to produce a book within

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a relatively short time—and these are not only economic pressures, but the more subtle pressures of one's own nature, one's desire to create innumerable facets of life—mean inevitably that the novelist writing, say, about the Middle Ages cannot first spend five years plowing through a jungle of manuscripts armed with Du Cange and a *Speculum Majus*. However, he can and does depend on his own professional tools: an avid curiosity, the ability to assimilate and absorb great quantities of material in a surprisingly short time, a knowledge of how people behave under all sorts of conditions, a certain amount of common sense and logic, a wide personal background of varied interests, and a helping of intuition which sometimes allows him to leap headlong to conclusions from which sober scholars would shudder away, but which are not always wholly invalid. No one can deny that all these ingredients went into the making of a novel like *War and Peace*; no one will deny the monumental stature of that novel. Many, however, have forgotten that it is a historical novel.

The historical novel is almost as old as the history book, for Livy was perhaps more a writer of fiction than of history. It is also fully as respectable as the serious work of history, for its creators span from Scott, Stevenson, Reade, Kingsley and Dumas, to Feuchtwanger and Thomas Mann, as well as countless other authors who essayed it only peripherally or experimentally, such as Kipling, Doyle or Somerset Maugham. And it is difficult, glancing back over these names and remembering some of their creations, to disavow the reality of their characters. For probably an enormous number of intelligent readers Long John Silver is far more alive than any of his actual historical contemporaries, while Cardinal Richelieu owes much of his personality to Dumas, whether for good or ill.

It stands to reason, since I am a historical novelist, that I have overloaded the balances in our favor. There are, indisputably, creative historians in a most laudable sense, great researchers and interpreters of the past. In the preface to many a historical novel you will find the author paying his respects and acknowledgments to such men and women: Treharne, Coulton, Edith Rickert, and so on endlessly. Some are specialists, as Dr. Roland Bainton in the field of the Reformation; others, like Etienne Gilson, ought per-

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haps to be considered philosophers; still others are not really professional historians, yet their insights in the field of history are profound, like those of Henry Adams. What is needed, I think, is for the historians to recognize the two-way nature of the debt: that "everything," as Epictetus said, "has two handles, the one by which it may be borne, the other by which it may not. If your brother acts unjustly, do not lay hold of the act by that handle wherein he acts unjustly, for this is the handle which cannot be borne; but lay hold of the other, that he is your brother . . . and you will lay hold of the thing by that handle by which it can be borne."

The historical novelist who is worth his salt, who is concerned with penetrating to the truth of history and making it graphic and human, is, as it were, the younger brother of the historian. The works of serious novelists often pave the way for a wider appreciation of the works of serious historians. Beyond this purely utilitarian value, the novelist ought to be regarded as a synthesizer and also an illuminator. A novel like *The Cornerstone*, for instance, may draw upon many points of view and provide a sort of profound generalization about an epoch, while a book like Anya Seton's *Katherine* will cast a smaller but still radiant beam upon one aspect of one particular moment in history.

The regard of the historian for the historical novelist is steadily growing along just these lines. Professor Henry Steele Commager enthusiastically praised *Andersonville* by MacKinlay Kantor; Professor G. M. Trevelyan considered it "an honour to introduce to the public this remarkable book"—Hope Muntz's *Golden Warrior*; recently Robert Graves was awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Archaeological Society in recognition of his contributions in the field of mythology and folklore; the research materials of Kenneth Roberts have been displayed in the libraries of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Fort Ticonderoga Museum, Phillips Exeter Academy and many other places.

"Victory does not come," sang one of the troubadours, probably Bertrand de Born who loved battle, "save by the clash of swords." In the relationship between the professional historian and the professional historical novelist, it must be recognized that knowledge is founded upon the clash of opinions, but it is also founded upon mutual respect between the debaters.

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Santayana at Home

JOHN LINEHAN

In June of 1952, on the day before I sailed from Genoa to New York, I went to the hospital on the Via San Stefano Rotondo hoping to say goodbye to George Santayana, who would die, I felt sure, before I could again be in Rome. I had spent the previous night on a train from Genoa, aware that seeing the man would compensate for spending the next night returning there. My trip was in vain.

The nun in the light-blue habit who opened the door said that at his own request Mr. Santayana no longer received visitors. He was resting at the moment, having gone for a walk that morning, and could not be disturbed. Mr. Santayana was very old and very, very ill. She would tell him I had called, not now, but later, perhaps during the following week.

"But I have come all the way from Genoa just to see him," I pleaded. "If only for a few minutes— Perhaps you will remember when I was last here—"

"I'm very sorry," she said as she closed the door. "People come from all over the world to see Mr. Santayana."

As I turned away, my disappointment was not reconciled by the thought that Mr. Santayana was either old or sick, because to me he had always been both. And soon the nun's comments on his condition proved accurate, and my fear of never seeing him again became fact. On September 27, death came to the pagan priest—a man who had made literature out of philosophy, a man who has simultaneously been called one of the six greatest thinkers of his time and the most provocative, maddening, controversial, and ineffectual of contemporary philosophers.

✪ A news writer for the Voice of America, JOHN LINEHAN has reported for many national magazines and for newspapers both in New York and abroad. He also spent three years with the Economic Cooperation Administration in Paris. His recent book, *Human Conditioning in the Factory,* deals with industrial relations and efficiency.

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In death, as in life, Santayana was both a lonely figure and a religious problem. His wish to be buried without ceremony in unconsecrated ground of a Catholic cemetery put officials in a dilemma, for no Catholic cemetery in Rome had any such unconsecrated ground. He was finally buried in consecrated ground of the Spanish section of Verano Cemetery, accepted through expediency by the church he had alternately praised and undermined.

By refusing to the end to commit himself as either Catholic or non-Catholic, Santayana disappointed but did not surprise those of any and all convictions who had hoped he would reach some conclusion. To the end, however, he had no beliefs and no loyalties. Denying the worth of any action because he considered it to be hopeless and futile, he attempted throughout his life to outline mankind's problems without offering solutions, and he loved no ideal or principle enough to wish to lift a finger to preserve it. He accepted all calamities from the Black Plague to the nuclear bomb as an inevitable process against which it was futile to fight. Pessimist, fatalist, preacher of despair, he had few apologists for his insistence on being negative.

In his life as a writer he was continually castigated for the dual role he played. Such eloquent tributes to Catholicism as his *Egotism in German Philosophy* made him an anathema to liberals who considered him a traitor to naturalism and the march of democratic progress. He was even more soundly disowned by Catholic writers for his materialist's disinclination to believe in a God he could not see, which formed the basis for such pagan, skeptic attacks upon the church as his *Idea of Christ in the Gospels*. Without bitterness he agreed with his bitter critics that he was open to charges of being vacillating, equivocal, logically ambiguous, morally ambidextrous, and religiously ambivalent, knowing that "when a man is indiscernibly a Catholic or an atheist he can hardly hope for much commendation from the apologists of theology or its critics." Yet, maintaining that spirituality could not be achieved through taking sides in a conflict, he excused himself for everything on the grounds that a poet must see both sides and take neither.

He irritated everyone who believed in anything, primarily because they agreed with much of what he expressed so beautifully

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and had to reject the opposite, which he also expressed. Many agreed that he was a cold fish, renowned for the cruelty of his wit, and nodded in approbation when Ralph Barton Perry recalled that Santayana had once said with pride that months would pass without his speaking to anyone except the headwaiter, thus evidently priding himself upon his solitude. Buttressed by evidence drawn from his own writing, his critics most frequently pictured him as a creature of the past, conceited, snobbish, aloof and bloodless, an Olympian who held the world in contempt and looked down upon the animal-fools that inhabited it with tolerant condescension from the vantage point of a man whose life evolved around superior contemplation rather than inferior passions.

To those of us who knocked upon his door during his declining days, therefore, inspired, I venture to say, primarily with the curiosity of tourists who found him a "must" point of interest on a visit to Rome, it was a shock to find that a human being lived in his room.

Late in 1948, when I made such a tour, the same nun who was to eject me later led me down the long corridors of the hospital, knocked on his door, stepped inside and said, "Mr. Santayana, there is a young man to see you."

I had no appointment, and he had never heard of me before. Yet, without asking my name, he replied, "Please show him in."

Abashed that an isolated hermit should so readily admit an uninvited stranger, I was completely unprepared to be admitted and, standing before him, I cursed myself for not having read more of and about his work. Santayana, apparently sensing all of this, smiled and said, "It is a pleasure for me to have visitors and I thank you for coming to see me. Won't you sit down?"

He motioned me into a comfortable chair, then squatted on a footstool at my feet—an arrangement that was to unnerve me all afternoon. For the next five hours we discussed and argued; and each time I rose to leave he urged me to stay longer. When I finally did insist upon going, I realized that I had forgotten to say that I had originally come to interview him. I told him this, and since he had discussed some of the lesser-known aspects of his finances, he was naturally startled. "I hope I have said nothing—"

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"Oh, Mr. Santayana, I assure you—"

"Perhaps you would have the kindness to send me a proof of whatever you may write."

"Of course," I said. "That would be the only fair thing to do."

This promise relieved Santayana, but at the time it upset me. Lesser men than he had ripped such interviews to pieces when given the opportunity, and such a concession might easily spell disaster to whatever I might write. More than all others, the meticulous archcritic, the Olympian Santayana would appear to be a threat in this regard.

Santayana had been at Harvard as a student from 1882 to 1886, as a teacher from 1889 to 1907, and as a full professor from 1907 to 1912. While he was renowned and respected for his brilliant lectures there, the love was unrequited. To him Harvard was "genteel and grubby" and "a cultural backwash"; and such epithets, coupled with his self-imposed exile in Europe after that time, generated vindictive criticism which provoked him to say in a letter to Professor Roback at Harvard in 1950: "Almost everything that is attributed to me at Harvard or by interviewers is invented and travestied. Myth starts absurdly and spreads incredibly even when the event that contradicts it is hardly passed. Not a word of gossipy biography is to be believed. . . ."

While these words pertained primarily to others, they might well have been an apt and devastating description of my own "gossipy biography . . . invented and travestied." Yet, the one and only distinction of what I did write was that whatever myths it might have contained were dissolved by Santayana's own handwriting. The manuscript I sent to him was promptly returned from Rome with the following letter.

Via San Stefano Rotondo, 6,
Rome. Dec. 29, 1948

Dear Mr. Linehan,

Taking you at your word, I have changed a lot of phrases in your pleasant interview because they were either inaccurate historically or, being put into my mouth, not those that I could have used. There has been some change in idiom and vocabulary everywhere in these seventy years, and my Boston language is that of Harvard wits of 1882-1895. It would not have been in

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character, for instance, for you to have made me say that my sister was "raised" in Boston; and there were several other words not in character.

It was very attentive of you to send me a proof, and you need not feel bound to adopt all my emendations if they seem to you unnatural. Your readers will not have my old-fashioned vocabulary.

Yours sincerely,
G. Santayana

Fearfully I scanned the ruins of my manuscript and found not only that his changes had been minor but that they actually enhanced the sketch. To me it was now of value less for the fact that it was approved by Santayana than for the corrections themselves, which heightened the charm of a man so roundly damned. For this reason I reprint the original manuscript here.

[Mr. Santayana's deletions are indicated; his substitute words or phrases are italicized.—EDITOR.]

December, 1948

At the age of eighty-four, George Santayana is a short, rotund, clean-shaven and bald-headed Spaniard who lives in Rome and writes in English for a predominantly American audience. While his most notable books, *The Last Puritan* and *Persons and Places*, have an American background, he is not, as so many believe, an American expatriate. Although he spent thirty-five of his eighty-four years in the United States, Spain is his ~~homeland~~ *country*.

"If I were just beginning to write today I believe I should write in Spanish," he said recently, "for we are witnessing today a Renaissance of Spanish literature—in Spain and in South America. But although one can write well in two languages, a person must write in only one to write beautifully. And I started writing in English."

For the past seven years Santayana has rarely left his simple but spacious room at a hospital managed by a group of Irish nuns that lies about halfway between the Lateran Palace and the Colosseum. There he has his bed, screened off during the day, his chaise longue, where he does all his writing in longhand, a desk to hold his manuscripts, and his shelves of books. Seated on an ottoman, with an elbow propped against the desk, the old man, in a heavy bathrobe several sizes too large, can sit for hours without weakening and talk animatedly with whoever comes to call.

"It is too bad it is too dark for you to see the view," he said, "but it is ~~fine~~ *pleasant* from here. They have let me keep most of my books in

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(the) ~~my living~~ *reception* room next door. When I first came I'd hoped to have two rooms, but there are no two which connect at the hospital and one is enough. I am far enough out of the way here so that people don't disturb me. No, no, you are not disturbing me. I was only going to read. I always read after tea and I enjoy ~~having company~~ *seeing people* then. But some people come in the morning and disturb me when I am trying to work and when I have enough interruptions.

"First someone brings me my breakfast, and later they bring me chocolate. Then the papers come and I go into the ~~living~~ *other* room to read them while someone does the room. Later the ~~mailman~~ *postman* comes, and of course I'm always tempted to read my ~~mail~~ *letters*. So I really don't manage to get much writing done. Sometimes when I am very *much* interested in what I'm doing I can keep writing for hours, but that happens less and less frequently. I am becoming too old to write very much. I find myself forgetting what I have written on the day before and I have to reread a great deal—though I can correct and revise at the same time."

Slow as it is for him to work, he is halfway through what will be his longest book. He has been working on *Dominations and Powers* for two years and he expects to die before it is finished. He began it in 1908 when he was dissatisfied with the political chapters in *The Life of Reason*, one of his first works, but he put it aside for forty years.

"But whatever has been written when I die will be published," he said, and opened a desk drawer to display a neat pile of finished chapters.

"I don't go out much any more because of my age. ~~Once a week~~ *Sometimes* I walk to the post office not far away for books they send me from Oxford, but it is becoming more and more of an effort, like a weight on my shoulders. I could go out more, of course, if I really wanted to. But I have never been much ~~for~~ *attached to* society. Not that I disapprove of it. Society gives great pleasure to some people. But I haven't ~~owned a dinner jacket~~ *had evening clothes* for thirty years. People are always coming to see me so I don't have to go out." He smiled. "I am like the Pope. I never return visits."

Although he expects to die where he is, in Rome, it is not because he prefers it to any other place in the world. He stayed there during the war because he couldn't leave.

"At the beginning of the war, when I first had trouble getting money from America, I tried to get into Switzerland. But when the Swiss asked me why I wanted to move and I told them 'because I should be allowed to receive four times as much money,' they didn't consider it a good enough reason. I would have gone to Spain, for I am a Spanish ~~citizen~~ *subject* with a Spanish passport and have family *connections*

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there, but my doctor forbade me to fly and I couldn't make it by train because of my ~~age~~ *achaques de la vejez.* It was almost an impossibility to cross France. It involved constant changing and waiting and one couldn't change money into francs which, of course, were required while crossing the country. It would have been too much for me. So I was forced to stay here

"Just before ~~mail from~~ *communications with* the States was ~~stopped~~ *cut off* entirely, I managed to arrange with the people in charge of my affairs over there to have them pay the Chicago branch of this order of sisters for my expenses here. I had moved into the hospital after it had been recommended to me by American friends who used to like coming here because the sisters are English-speaking. I found myself ~~completely~~ without money so it was fortunate that my ~~allowance~~ *board* could be paid to the Chicago branch which was expanding and was happy to have it paid that way. I didn't find out until after the war when I could get ~~mail~~ *news* again that the U. S. government had stopped the payment there because they thought the money was going to Italy. The sisters have been very kind."

He mentioned that although the sisters pray for him, his living at the hospital has had no effect upon his thinking.

"My whole philosophy is materialist and pagan. If I were a Christian I should be a ~~Roman~~ *good* Catholic, but I am not. I heard once that an American bishop after reading ~~one of~~ my book~~s~~ *On the Idea of Christ* told someone that 'not one word could have been written by a Christian.' Of course, it's true."

In reference to his other books he said, "I am happy that I never had to pay to have any of my work published. Even my first book of poems had a second edition and the publishers sent me a check for $1.37. I thought for a while I would ~~frame it~~ *have it framed,* but I finally threw it away."

His adult awakening to Europe, which led eventually to his preference for living on the Continent, began after his mother, during Santayana's first year at Harvard, asked him if he would like to summer in Spain with his father.

"Although she was Spanish, my mother ~~had spent most of~~ *lived half* her life in Boston and preferred living there, while my father, who couldn't speak English, found it impossible to live in America. I went to Spain, of course, and after that I went almost every summer until my father died. By that time my sister, who ~~was~~ *had* also ~~raised~~ *lived* in Boston, had married a Spanish widower ~~and moved~~ *after returning* to Spain. I have grandnephews in Boston now, and stepnephews and stepnieces in Spain, the children of my sister's husband, who want me to come and live with them. But though they are very kind and dear to

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me, they would never leave me time to work, and I am better off and happier here not burdening anyone."

He prefers not to comment on world conditions because, although he reads the Vatican's daily newspaper, *L'Observatore Romano*, "for its foreign news," his interest is mainly in the past. He does believe that if there were a war, communism would be quickly in control of Europe and the clash would be between the United States and Russia. His attitude toward the United States is still essentially that expressed in *The Last Puritan*.

"There is much liberty in America," he said, "political and religious liberty, but there is no encouragement for individualists. People are cast into a common mold, and money is all important. I once knew a fine violinist whose father made him go into his brokerage office. He never played the violin again. There is a different set of values over here. That is why so many Americans have always escaped to Europe—to free their individual spirits."

His gentle, almost fatherly reaction to these notes showed, I think, a human element of Santayana which is often and readily overlooked. While he had neither faith in God nor hope in a better world, he showed charity in overlooking the triviality of a piece which so obviously avoided any description of his thinking. The same basic warmth, consideration and kindliness dominated the whole of that afternoon.

Rough as it is, the sketch conveys two noteworthy tendencies of Santayana: his preoccupation with death which he felt would carry him away before he finished *Dominations and Powers*, although it did not; and the peculiar horse-and-carriage outlook which not only prevented his seeing or believing that in present-day America the sons of bankers were more often than not encouraged to become writers, artists or musicians, but which made him the chief mourner of an imperfect but more beautiful past. His preference for the Old World and its attitudes and his despair of the new disorder, so inaptly called "progress," were revealed, for example, when we discussed the relative merits of heredity and environment.

I took the attitude that a great pianist, if allowed to develop, could as readily spring from a nonmusical family as from a series

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of pianists; Santayana doubted the possibility. Then, while I used Columbus, Napoleon and Abraham Lincoln as illustrations that merit should be the primary guide in determining a man's influence and position, Santayana, aristocrat and monarchist, supported the orderliness of platonic separation of men by birth into classes of gold, silver and bronze, holding firmly to the belief in the divine right of kings to be capable leaders.

For every Ferdinand and Isabella, Louis XIV, Charles V and Elizabeth I that he plucked from history, I retaliated with an Alphonso XIII, Louis XVI, Franz Josef or George IV. For every mediocrity I exhumed from a royal line he had his king of dazzling brilliance, until at last I turned in triumph to the Ptolemies of Egypt as illustrations of the weakness and weak-mindedness so often produced by inbreeding. Santayana's eyes then sparkled as he cried, "Ah, but look at Cleopatra! The most beautiful woman the world has ever known."

Santayana saw grace, perfection and enduring beauty in the rite involving the Queen of Spain's expressing her humility so gloriously—sincerity being irrelevant to the issue—by her yearly washing of the feet of twelve beggars. Then, after spinning a golden world filled with elegant traditions which might have added beauty to a now drab, degraded world, he shattered my whole conception of the contemplative sage, looking with dignity at the past, by leaning forward and asking earnestly if I thought that the Duke and Duchess of Windsor got along together. The abrupt transition from serenity and imperturbability to a curiosity that approached naïveté was as disconcerting as if a king should take a pratfall during his coronation.

As he went on to explain to me his attitudes toward religion, there was evidence of the same elastic stretch from an Olympian's dignity in his explanations to a small boy's avidity for my reactions.

Santayana the Catholic, by birth, tradition and some inclination, found in religion the kind of poetry that expressed the greater moral truth. Rejecting Protestantism on the grounds that it damned more often than it saved, he was attracted to Catholicism because it spoke for "reason and good," it was essentially aristocratic and it preached disillusionment. He admired its government by an aris-

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tocracy of the best men, the college of cardinals. He enjoyed the beauty of the cult in its rites and traditions. And he agreed with it that neither perfection nor salvation could be attained upon this earth.

Santayana the skeptic began at that point, extending his despair of salvation on earth to despair of salvation in an afterlife, believing neither in God nor in Heaven. Although he often expressed a desire to believe, Santayana as a materialist rejected the church for its zeal, its dogmatism and its myths. In its zealous attempt to guide the stream of life, he thought the church militant, like all organizations, was futile and vulgar. It was disruptive because all action produces disharmony and unhappiness. It was presumptuous in its belief that it was infallible and in its disruptive crusade to convert an unwilling and disinterested world. Refusing to accept the Catholic dogma of an immortal soul, he did not believe in the supernatural and maintained, because it was not possible for him, that faith is possible only for those animal natures which do not question.

With no faith in a God he could not see, with no inclination to ecclesiastical discipline, with no belief in the worth of making sacrifices, he felt that the church was too narrow in its piety and he rejected its dogma because all dogma is too positive of being right. Since sin, in his opinion, stood for a lack of harmony in one's nature, it could be repaired, not by atonement or penance, but only by the self-assurance of an Epicurean. He was, he said, a pagan unable to choose between a lovely faith which he believed was untrue and an ungainly world which, although true, was ugly. And so he sought beauty in theology without belief.

Denying the worth of crusading on any pretext, he would no more admit in 1948 than in 1888 that the stresses upon the age in which he lay dying might provoke a firmer need for principle and ideals, for strengthening spiritual values in order to preserve men's minds from being victimized and shackled by totalitarianism. Santayana, who had fled to Europe to preserve his individuality, believed that a man's will is inwardly free when, like his own, it is controlled by intellect rather than by passion. Thus, whatever might befall the body, the mind was safe from external pressure or

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coercion. Mussolini had left him alone and in peace, he said, and there was no reason to believe that any other political system would not do likewise. Any disruptive squeeze on free expression, he maintained, would mean only that his work would have to wait for publication until after his death.

Although in its present inclination communism demands that an intellectual commit himself or suffer the consequences, Santayana could not foresee being dragged from his hermit's cave and forced to explain himself or that he would, even by default, be in danger of undergoing the martyrdom which, as a man of inaction who loathed causes, he dreaded.

Believing in nothing, seeing the fallacies of every course and of each side, loving nothing enough to wish to defend it, he preferred to be shipwrecked and rudderless rather than fight against the storm of transient politics, even when the wind bearing down from the Russian plains, blowing on a world-wide scale rather than on a national German or Italian level, endangered the liberty to be individual, which he always prized the most.

From his chosen vantage point on the mountain summit, Santayana looked down on Catholicism on one side and skepticism on the other, seeking out with a poet's eye the merits and demerits, the assets and liabilities of each. Since he often indicated his wish that he could come down, and since he had the potentiality of becoming one of the greatest Catholic or non-Catholic philosophers if he could show preference for a cause, it was inevitable that men of conviction would bring pressure to bear upon him to convince him to endorse their side. Spurred on to consider that his was an important soul that must be saved, militants were encouraged by the occasional chinks in his armor, such as his fussy solicitude for the domestic life of an ex-king. He was avidly interested in other people's conversions to Catholicism—that of poet Robert Lowell, for example. And as could be expected, the nuns around him were encouraged when he allowed them to put a medal around his withering neck. Whoever thought that this was more than a gesture to humor them, however, ignored the fact that he rejected their prayers in a way which might have been insulting were it not for the gruff tenderness that underlay it.

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"They pray for me, the sisters here, but I tell them that it won't do any good. They're wasting their time, for I will never change. Just as I would never change a word of anything that I have ever written."

Particularly in his more sensitive, declining years, whenever anyone tried to gather him into the fold he grew hysterically offended. Troubled and disharmonized by such militant zeal, he resented the implication that the nearness of his death might stimulate him to reconsider; and he found dishonorable the very thought that he should receive an insurance salesman who offered him a policy for potential salvation at the last minute when he had, years before, rejected the fine print. Without contrition, for he was without convictions, he railed violently against those who overlooked the fact that he had resigned himself to a skeptic's death before he reached the age of twenty. He told them that they could not pray or argue him into changing; and they did not, for in his whole philosophy, maintained for over sixty years, he premeditated the day when he would enter a limbo reserved for pagans without knowledge of Christ, condemned to die without hope—a fate most appropriate, he thought, for noble souls with a clear vision of human life who sought beauty in theology without belief.

From his first lonely thoughts to his last lonely wish—to be carefully buried beside but apart from believers—he was to the end consistent in his determination to be everlastingly noncommittal. He had long since made the final decision to remain indecisive, true to his lonely self and his belief in nothing. And he approached his eternal limbo and his everlasting despair with a serene indifference and resignation that sheltered within the act a courage and dignity which might well have been the envy of many a terrified Christian who lay on his deathbed awaiting the opening of the Gates of Heaven.

If Santayana proved nothing with his fatalism and with preaching despair and inaction, if he found few followers because he refused to lead them anywhere, if he offered no solutions to the problems confronting mankind, it is none the less premature to disown or condemn a man who was his own most brilliant and unflattering critic and who himself never judged with finality. Even

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though he refused to do anything, by eloquently and poetically taking both sides and accepting neither, he sharpened the minds of his readers for the moment when, in the last analysis, they had to choose for themselves.

While he was often damned as a hypocrite for urging others to keep a faith that he would not keep himself, Santayana, at least, wanted no one to believe in the self-styled lay religion of which he was sole priest. He discouraged believers because he rejected the very word "belief," and he recognized the futility and uselessness of his "religion" in an outside world where problems must be solved. Withdrawn from the earth on which men must decide how best to act, vote, think and pray, Santayana felt no need for beliefs, convictions and firm prejudices to sustain him in his self-sustaining life. He did not really live, as other men do, and he knew it. Yet, although he did not join them in the world, he knew well that should his doubts prove wrong about an afterlife, he would not be exempt from joining other men and sharing with them the risk of being damned.

Once, having precipitated the conversion of a friend to Catholicism, he reacted with the words: "Let us hope that if I didn't save my own I saved the soul of Charlie Davis."

If this be cruel and cynical wit, the joke, as he intended it, was on Santayana, the man who never believed that he was right, who always doubted his own doubts.

His eternal eagerness to admire and to encourage those who disagreed with him was upon him when I rose to leave at the end of an afternoon enlivened by his discussions. For me it had been an extraordinary day because the unexpectedly long visit to Santayana had followed a noontime audience at the Vatican. Once relieved by my promise to send him my manuscript, Santayana thanked me for my visit. He shook my hand, and, with twinkling eyes, said, "Now that you've heard my side of it, you must go to see the Pope."

"Oh, Mr. Santayana, it's too late," I said. "I saw the Pope this morning."

His face lit up with genuine delight.

"That's wonderful," he said. "Wonderful. Then you must really promise to return to Rome and see us both again."

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So . . . . . .

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

When I was about twelve years old, I was taken to hear the bishop during his annual visitation. His subject was Herbert Spencer, of whom I had never heard but of whom the bishop disapproved so eloquently that I sought out books on his "Synthetic Philosophy" at the library the very next day. I don't think I ever got all the way through even the first volume, but I was so impressed by the introductory discourse on "the Knowable and Unknowable" that on this basis alone I was for some years (say from age twelve to sixteen) a devout Spencerian. It was not until quite a bit later that I began to be aware of a catch: Much of the Unknowable is so much more important than most of the Knowable that even guesses about it are more interesting and more fateful than positive knowledge about the rest. What, for instance, one finds oneself believing about the nature of the beautiful and the good does more to determine conduct, as well as the whole tenor and color of existence, than all one can know about the stage history of *Hamlet* or the function of hormones.

To this day I am more sympathetic toward those who recognize the two realms than to those who maintain that by hook or by crook—by induction or deduction, science or metaphysics, logic or revelation—everything is knowable. And I suppose it is because I did accept the distinction without renouncing my interest in either category that I became a minor man of letters instead of the scientist I was for some time resolved to be. After all, it is with the Unknowable, not the Knowable, that literature is principally concerned—at least what is left of it when one has subtracted the physiology, sociology, psychology, et cetera, with which it has increasingly got itself involved. Its conclusions about life may carry conviction, but they are never demonstrably true.

One of my respected friends is an economist who goes in strongly for semantics. He believes that everything worth knowing is knowable and that everything real can be *clearly* defined. He is especially fond of asserting that (1) any question is "meaningless" unless the answer one gives will affect one's actions, and (2) intelligent men never disagree if each understands what the other is saying. But both of these statements are nonsense: the first, because the way you feel about things is as important as the acts you perform in determining what the experience of living will be; the second, because the most significant of all disagreements are those involving differences between two value judgments which the completest understanding only sharpens.

The assumption that unless a thing can be defined there is no use trying to deal with it scientifically is fundamental and, for science, indispensable. But most men at most times have resolutely, and wisely, refused to concern themselves exclusively with science. The things which have interested them most and been most persistently discussed are those which cannot be defined, many of which, so some say, have no real existence. A few moments ago I turned to *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* which aims to record those English sentences which are the most memorable and the most often alluded to. The largest number of entries come under such heads as "Man" and "Life," which are at best somewhat difficult to define. And there are about four hundred involving "Soul."

Now even during the so-called ages of

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faith there were many men who were at least surer of other things than they were that they, or anyone else, possessed a "soul" in any easily definable sense. Today, perhaps only a minority of educated men would use the word without putting mental quotation marks around it. Certainly few would risk a definition they would call satisfactory even to themselves. But they cannot give the word up because it is the only term available which will suggest, even vaguely, a certain complex of hopes, fears, guesses, intuitions, vague notions and elusive concepts without which it would be impossible to give any true account of their mental and emotional life. The only way to get rid of this and various other semantically unsatisfactory words is to do what, as a matter of fact, positivists usually do: namely, make the bland assumption that the emotional and, indeed, the whole conscious life of a human being is not worth taking into any sort of consideration. But the persistence of literature is proof that mankind still refuses to accept it.

Perhaps the most striking indication that aesthetic and moral questions cannot be settled scientifically is the fact that when positive answers are stated in definable and seemingly measurable terms it is precisely then, rather than when undefinable terms are used, that these answers become most obviously "meaningless." Kant's clumsy restatement of the Golden Rule, "Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law," was no doubt intended to reduce the poetry of Jesus to a workable formula. But it merely exposes the absurdity of the formula as a formula because all men do not want to do the same things and because, if rigidly applied, it would mean that no one should, say, decide to become a lawyer by profession because everybody can't practice law.

The equally famous utilitarian formulation which turns upon "the greatest good of the greatest number" is even worse, though for a different reason. It pretends to be objectively applicable; but it cannot be objectively applied because it involves two independent criteria, the relative importance of which is not defined. Grant, for the sake of argument, that it is possible to determine which of two policies will prove good for the greatest number. Grant, for example, that a radio broadcast of Gershwin will be good for a greater number than a broadcast of Beethoven. But will the good of the few be greater than the good of the many, and if so, how then shall one choose between the lesser good of a million and the greater good of a hundred thousand? That we are increasingly prone to forget the "greatest good" part and regard the greatest number criterion alone proves that the formula itself is unworkable. My economist friend notwithstanding, two men may very well understand what each means when he says that he accepts "the greatest good of the greatest number" as a scientific criterion, and yet continue to disagree as to whether any specific educational, social or governmental policy is good or bad.

I have been accused, and not without some justification, of a pettish antipathy toward economists and the "social scientists." Polemic aside, I am ready to admit that many of them are intelligent and amiable men. Moreover, not a few recognize that their enterprise is most fruitful when it is frankly humanistic—that is, when it assumes values outside the economic or sociologic and admits generalizations not scientifically supportable. When, on the other hand, the attempt is made to adhere rigidly to a scientific method—that is, to deal only with what can be defined, measured and experimented with—the results are either trivial or they lead to an account of human life which is grossly inadequate because it disregards the intangible. This is why one recognizes oneself in the characters of a good novel but not in the economists' or the sociologists' account of, say, the middle-class American functioning in a capitalist economy.

Almost any of Thorstein Veblen's usually ingenious analyses will reveal both his shrewdness and their limitations. Take, for example, his remark that the lawn of a

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dwelling house is an example of conspicuous expenditure and that what it represents is "unconsumed pasture." That men sometimes have lawns for nothing except show is certainly true. That lawns can be used merely to demonstrate how much luxurious display the owner can afford is obvious. Similarly, good food is sometimes served at table and beautiful pictures hung on the walls for the same reason. But it is no more true to say that the only possible meaning of good food or great art is display than it is to say that lawns are never cultivated except for the same reason. There are men who enjoy good food even in private, who are genuinely moved by art, and who maintain lawns to make themselves happy. But these are motives in which, for some reason, the sociologist finds it very difficult to believe. And it is just because he does tend to leave out the best motives of the best men that his account of human behavior becomes a libel on the human race. Perhaps one of the reasons is that he is usually a utilitarian, that the utilitarian is a kind of puritan, and that like puritans of all kinds, he distrusts joy as well as pleasure because he assumes that only the corruption and misuse of any good thing reveals its true nature and that, therefore, no enjoyment except sinful enjoyment is possible. He is likely to end by insisting (as the Russians have) that every pleasant and beautiful thing shall be banished from human life—that all lawns shall be pastures. It seldom seems to occur to him, for example, that an uncrowded world where a margin of land can be afforded might be better than one so filled with hungry mouths that no blade of grass can be left uncropped.

Veblen's own imagination and humor mitigate the effect of his analyses. He tends to make one believe that being a sociologist is legitimate fun even if nothing else is. But humor and imagination are not conspicuous in the majority of his present-day successors in whom limitations of temperment as well as of method seem to make it impossible for them to give any account of human life which does not leave out everything that makes it interesting, enjoyable or worthy of admiration. Most of them, to be sure, appear to have recognized the old objection that the "economic man" (the man who is nothing but producer and consumer) is a fiction and a decidedly dismal one at that. But the "sociological man" they have evolved is only more complicated without having been enriched with recognizably human attributes. If he is no longer merely producer and consumer, he is still motivated only by "needs," subject only to "pressures," and desirous only of "security," "status," et cetera. He is still incapable of generous emotions, elevated aspirations or the joy of life.

From casual reading, I gather that the term "status" is now enjoying a phenomenal vogue. In the very old days, man only bought, sold, produced and consumed. Later, "the need for sexual expression" was invoked to account for whatever seemed otherwise unaccountable. Now it seems that even sex is relegated to second place and man is first of all an animal motivated by a "desire for status."

Under this designation is lumped without discrimination any aspiration toward distinction of any kind. "Garbage collectors who pull political wires to get themselves appointed manager of the city dump" (the phrase is H. L. Mencken's) are men seeking status; so is anyone who undertakes to conduct a department in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR; so, for that matter, is anyone who aspires to recognized excellence or eminence in any field of human activity. To make any distinction would be to deal in intangibles, and intangibles are abhorred by science.

Moreover (at least so far as my admittedly limited familiarity with writings on the subject goes), the word "status" is seldom used without at least faintly derogatory connotations. It always seems to imply a mean desire to justify the feeling that one is better than one's neighbors; and the implication seems to be that if the desire for status (which includes all the various not quite identical impulses which used to be called "ambition," "aspiration," "pursuit of excellence," et cetera) could somehow be eliminated, we should be a great deal nearer to

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the achievement of that true democracy in which all real as well as all artificial distinctions have been abolished. Then all men would have not only equal opportunities (which constitutes the first step) and be equally secure (the second step) but would also be and remain in every respect equal. The very concept of status will have to disappear in a truly classless society—which means of course that every desire to *know* more, *do* more or *be* more than the average will have to disappear along with the commoner desire to *have* more.

The distinction between ambition (which is the *last* infirmity of noble minds) and aspiration (which is not an infirmity at all) may be even more difficult to define securely than the difference between hoping that one will be recognized as a great poet and pulling political wires to get oneself appointed manager of the city dump. But it is just because sociology cannot make the distinction and literature can, that literature gives the truer and, ultimately, the more useful account of human life. In the sociological man hardly more than in the economic man do I recognize myself, my friends, or even, for that matter, such sociologists as have come under my observation. It is not what we are like because, at a minimum, it is not what we seem to ourselves to be, and what we seem to ourselves to be has a great deal to do with what we are.

While contemporary sociology is so busy explaining that the present condition of man is largely the result of the special form taken today by the desire for status, many poets, philosophers and literary critics are equally insistent that the most strikingly novel characteristic of modern man is his "sense of alienation." He is no longer, so they say, able to identify himself with his country, his society, his age or, for that matter, with the human race. And I cannot help wondering if there is not some connection between this sense of alienation and the picture of man and society which sociology presents. These really are confused and troubled times. Perhaps the world seldom has been so puzzling and so insecure. But it has often been very strikingly so, in so far as we can judge, without producing an epidemic sense of "alienation." Perhaps what so many now feel alienated by and from is not man or society but the picture of both which sociology and psychology offer and which has been increasingly accepted as the truest picture. If I really believed that my fellow creatures were nothing but economic men "subject to pressures," or that they are adequately described in terms of the "sex satisfactions" they seek and the "desires for status" by which they are driven, I'd feel mighty alienated myself. Perhaps I do not, just because I feel very much alienated from so much of sociology.

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The Politics of Art

ICON AND IDEA: The Function of Art in the Development of Human Consciousness. By Sir Herbert Read. *Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 161 pp. 88 plates. $7.50.*

Reviewed by HAZARD ADAMS

In the politics of art, Sir Herbert Read, poet, former editor, prose writer and literary critic, is one of the most tireless and effective campaigners of our time. In his many books on art he has constantly spoken in behalf of its cultural importance, and he has stumped energetically for revisions in education based upon this importance. In 1953 and 1954, Sir Herbert delivered the Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard. *Icon and Idea* comprises these lectures, voluminously illustrated with eighty-eight plates ranging from prehistoric cave drawings to photographs of recent architectural models.

The argument of the book is Sir Herbert's most vigorous and telling polemic thus far. It attempts to justify historically two claims: first, that art has a historical priority over the so-called rational symbolic forms; and second, that it "has been, and still is, the essential instrument in the development of human consciousness." This view, Sir Herbert admits, is strongly implied in the work of certain of his predecessors, especially in Ernst Cassirer's *Philosophie der Symbolischen Formen*. Cassirer, however, never developed these implications to the conclusions which Sir Herbert claims are inevitable.

The form of the book is historical. Sir Herbert begins by discussing Paleolithic art and the development of what he calls vitality, the "specific awareness and apprehension of a single and separate image." Then he moves to the Neolithic period, in which the sense of pattern (not characteristic of Paleolithic art), the isolation of form in abtract design, and the sense of "beauty" appear. (One of Sir Herbert's talents is to use such abstract words as "beauty" with real and definite meaning.) From the prehistoric periods he takes us through the intervening centuries to our own, considering as he does so the development of the senses of the numinous, the ideal, and the inner self. In all cases he finds art a *precursor* and necessary creator of later expansions of man's intellectual vision. In his view, then, art is not, as it is often traditionally interpreted, primarily a *representation* or expression of the artist's times. Since it is, in fact, the creator of our intellectual forms, our concept of education must very nearly be reversed. We have had the cart before the horse. Sir Herbert holds that artistic activity creates symbolic forms from heretofore undifferentiated areas of feeling and makes possible the capturing of ideas in subsequent religious, philosophic and scientific modes of thought. Thus art holds the primary position:

> It is only in so far as the artist establishes symbols for the representation of reality that mind, as a structure of thought, can take shape. The artist establishes these symbols by becoming conscious of new aspects of reality, and by representing his consciousness of these new aspects of reality in the plastic or poetic images.

By this Sir Herbert does not mean that as soon as art sets the rational faculties to operate upon the caught forms of experience which it presents, then the function of art is forever completed. Not at all. He is combating the positivistic view that art is a primitive form to be superseded by man's reason, just as science superseded magic. He sees art as a constant force of renewal for intellectual vision. Aesthetically, art

✪ HAZARD ADAMS, assistant professor of English at the University of Texas, is author of *Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision.*

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does not progress, but it makes intellectual progress possible by constantly forming new intuitions of reality upon which the intellect may exercise itself.

There are, of course, periods of decadence in art during which, for the most part, the intellectual food that a new art epoch has provided has been consumed. During these periods art, trapped in the rational vision it helped to create, may become stultified into unprolific forms. But art constantly renews itself and thereby brings to birth new intellectual possibilities. There are cyclic implications in Sir Herbert's theory. There are also important implications in regard to the comparative functions of the art of the past and contemporary art in present society, for in one sense the art of the past has already provided its creative impulse.

This short commentary gives only a brief picture of the scope and aim of Sir Herbert's book. In future works perhaps there will be disagreements with particulars; undoubtedly there will be amplifications of points he has made. (The book is astonishingly short for its scope.) Sir Herbert has brought into compact and lucid form a theory of art central to contemporary aesthetics and adumbrated in perhaps the most intellectually fashionable philosophies of our decade—those of Cassirer and Wittgenstein. If the idea he has proposed seems almost a truism when reduced to the paraphrase I have made of it, the reason is that the idea is implicit in much modern thought and even, I think, in Sir Herbert's own previous work. *Icon and Idea*, therefore, is not a new departure but a kind of culmination or fulfillment of Sir Herbert's campaigning.

If one is not astonished by the thesis, he may find, as always in Sir Herbert's writing, constant attempts at significant comparisons and consistently interesting comments upon particular works of art. In the politics of art, the election is never won; we may be thankful for this because we may expect more on the subject from an aesthetician who is always thought-provoking and whose prose is pleasantly devoid of the jargon of the ward heelers.

Education in America

THE CITADEL OF LEARNING. By James Bryant Conant. *New Haven: Yale University Press. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege: Oxford University Press. 79 pp. $2.00.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM T. HASTINGS

Among the deluge of comments on the present state of education in America and predictions and prescriptions for its future, anything by the former president of the oldest, financially strongest, and many would say most distinguished of our universities commands particular attention. Mr. Conant's *The Citadel of Learning* has the qualities one would expect: wide acquaintance with all the problems, clear and positive statements, concrete proposals for the future. His concern, like ours, is for the safeguarding of research, of professional education, and of what he calls "general education"; for the availability of educational opportunity for all Americans; for unhampered freedom of inquiry. The development of his thought is enriched by his experience as a university administrator and a scientist. That experience also leads to an emphasis which may be open to some question.

The title essay, based on an address given last year at Yale, he describes as "reflections on the function of a university" by an observer of what has happened in Germany, including the Sovietizing of Berlin University. Stalin had called on youth to capture "the citadel of learning," and the essay reminds us of what that means from the point of view of free inquiry. The two functions of a university are the advancement of learning and the furtherance of advanced education. In this essay the second function is left to one side. In pursuit of new knowledge there must be an aim beyond immediate goals; there must be free controversy among scholars seeking to ar-

WILLIAM T. HASTINGS, professor of English emeritus at Brown University, is the author of books and articles on English literature. As president of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, Mr. Hastings serves as the consulting editor of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

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rive at "warranted beliefs." The different meaning of "warrant" for the sciences and the humanities is recognized, somewhat tentatively perhaps for the humanities. "The international flag of freedom [must continue] to fly above an inviolate citadel of learning."

The second essay, "An Old Tradition in a New World," from an address at Michigan State College, describes sympathetically the development in the United States during the last century of tax-supported institutions. Mr. Conant contrasts their aim with that of the European university, which is, he says, to educate the selected few after years of rigorous preparation. But "the whole idea of a college preparatory course loses its meaning" in the face of the American ideal of education for all. Here I would interject two remarks. First, that the contrast is perhaps overstated; it may be valid as between Oxford and Michigan State, but how about Manchester and Princeton? Second, some "proponents of the older tradition" in American education, to borrow Mr. Conant's phrase, would certainly remark that since a college preparatory course lost its meaning, one sometimes has had the feeling that the members of a freshman section do not *know* anything about anything.

After this introductory contrast, Mr. Conant urges that the American tradition in education stands "in need of modification to meet the challenge of our new world, the constricted globe of the mid-twentieth century." We need to teach the contrast between our "doctrines" and those of communism; we need to make a "hard-headed appraisal" of our neighbors, now so much nearer. Hence, in "general education" there should be a greater emphasis on American history, including foreign policy; in "specialized education" there should be more stress on foreign languages. Much of the time which is now wasted in school and college should be devoted to developing the latent capacities of our youth.

Finally, and superficially in conflict with the opening remarks about education for all and the meaninglessness of college preparatory courses, he urges the importance of "education of the gifted." He regrets "our failure to identify at a relatively young age those boys and girls who have more than an average talent for mathematics," and, he adds, for foreign languages. We should identify "scholastic talent young (in mathematics or foreign languages or both)" and provide "teachers who will stimulate the selected students to do their utmost because they want to and as a matter of pride." With this, I think, all "proponents of the older tradition" will agree; indeed, it is a part of their gospel. But the specification of the two subjects suggests that instrumental rather than cultural values are in the author's mind.

The third essay aims "to bring together the two themes of the preceding essays in terms applicable to the situation that now confronts" us, the impending great increase in the school and college population and steadily rising costs. In considerable detail he describes the various arrangements for the financing of research, for the retention on university staffs of teachers and investigators in the fields of medicine, engineering, the sciences, economics, law. His choice among the alternatives is based on the importance of preserving the scholar's opportunity and desire to advance learning rather than solve an immediate problem.

There is a frank reference to "the chaos of the American educational scene" so far as standards are concerned. This prepares for his specific recommendation: not "limiting college enrollment to a relatively small elite," nor allowing tax-supported universities to be "overwhelmed with students, with deterioration in the quality of the faculty," but rather, a great increase in local two-year colleges "to enroll as many as a half of the boys and girls who wished to engage in formal studies beyond the high school." The advantages of this proposal, he thinks, will be obvious to all "who regard universities as first of all institutions for research, scholarly work, and professional education," as well as to those who are interested "in the education of all our future citizens."

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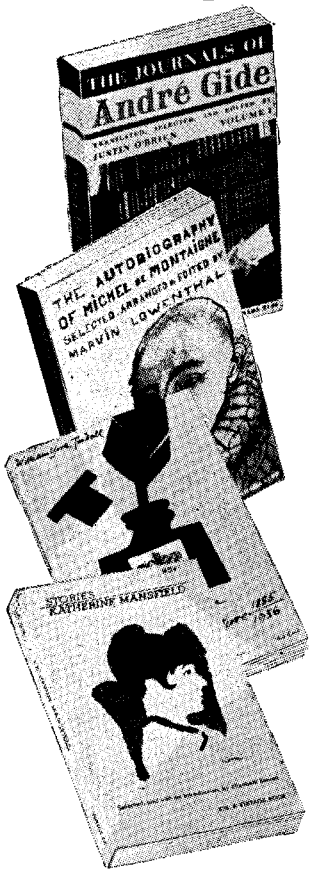

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Where does this leave Harvard College?

There is a brief—I think inadequate—treatment of the few good and many less good four-year liberal arts colleges. Their future, he declares, is important, but "it is the future size and goal of our tax-supported universities and the future expansion of our two-year tax-supported colleges that confront the American taxpayer with a basic choice."

Now undoubtedly there will be a great increase in junior colleges in the next decades. Whether it will satisfactorily solve the problem is not so clear. In a sense, the universities will be passing the buck. The state taxing authority will be relieved, but local taxes will become much heavier: for buildings and for the salaries of the staff. Will the staffs be good, or made up of those persons who would have caused the deterioration of university faculties which Mr. Conant fears? Will they have two curricula, one "terminal" and one arranged with an eye to preparing for admittance to the junior year of a university? Will the pressure for "practical" courses be more severe on the two-year colleges than it now is on the universities?

I have queried a number of details, in passing, in this stimulating book. It is good to have a forthright statement of this kind from an administrative officer of long experience. Speaking generally, it seems to me that readers who are connected with strong four-year liberal arts colleges or with strong smaller universities in which the undergraduate college is an important part of the picture will feel that their problem is rather different. I think, too, that the humanities and their role in developing the whole man are somewhat slighted. I suppose more than half of any group of undergraduates, in public or private institutions, are going into "business," and more than half of them concentrate in the unprofessional subjects of literature (including foreign *literature*, not language), history, philosophy, art, music. But one can't cover everything in three essays. We should be grateful for what we have.

Conformism Again!

IN SEARCH OF HERESY: American Literature in an Age of Conformity. By John W. Aldridge. *New York: McGraw-Hill. 208 pp. $4.00.*

Reviewed by ROBERT LANGBAUM

John Aldridge has always shown a predilection for the latest thing. In 1947, before anyone else had got around to it, he published an article in *Harper's* on the new postwar generation of American writers—thus staking out a claim to be the critical spokesman of that generation. He consolidated his claim with his first book, *After the Lost Generation*, in 1951. And now, with the present volume, he reaps the fruits of success, which for a critic is to publish a collection of his lectures, magazine articles and even book reviews on the assumption that his occasional remarks deserve a permanent format. That this can be a dangerous assumption is indicated by the insubstantiality of the book reviews in this volume and the staleness of certain of the articles, especially the polemical articles which, having lost immediacy while retaining the tone of immediacy, seem in many places to be picking a fight where there is no occasion for one. This may be why I was annoyed by what is otherwise a book of lively, if not strikingly original, criticism with which I am on the whole in agreement.

On the one hand, Mr. Aldridge attacks the literary market place where the new writer, even if he is successful, finds it difficult to build a reputation or exert influence because mass publishing has dissolved that compact, literate audience which used to be capable of remembering a writer's name between books. On the other hand, he allows the writer no refuge from the market

Assistant professor of English at Cornell University, ROBERT LANGBAUM has written on political and literary subjects for THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR and other periodicals. His book, *The Poetry of Experience*, will be published in the spring.

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place, for he attacks with even greater violence that favorite whipping boy of the current literary scene, the writer in the university. "The universities control literature," he says. "The professor is the new cultural force, the leader, and god of the new aristocracy of the intellect." The danger for literature is conformity. The danger for the writer-professor is that his teaching becomes a substitute for his writing; it gives him the prestige and satisfactions of the literary life without his having to earn them through literary production. It enables him to evade, Mr. Aldridge says in the final words of his article on this subject, "the gravest risk of all, the risk of coming to grips with his talent under the cold, pitiless gaze of posterity."

These final words are sheer trumpery. Many writers have chosen teaching just because it seems to threaten their integrity less than other ways of making a living—journalism, for example, or writing potboilers. Nor do the writer-professors seem to be lacking in productiveness if, as Mr. Aldridge tells us, their work overruns the more serious magazines, not to mention the publishers' lists. I was primarily annoyed, however, by Mr. Aldridge's air of having taken up a daring position against an organized body of professorial opinion, when it is precisely the professors, and not only the writers among them, who have been most concerned about the question of the writer in the university. Writer-professors like Randall Jarrell and Irving Howe had already defined the situation and made their attack upon it when Mr. Aldridge picked it up as a ready-made subject. And needless to say, Mr. Aldridge is himself a professor. "I have been a university teacher for several years," he says in a footnote, "and expect to continue as one. But I do not see that any purpose is served in attempting to make a virtue of the necessity which impelled me to teaching." Exactly so—which is why a little humility and humor are called for.

As for the charge of conformity, it would seem to be the first sign of a genuine, as opposed to a party-line, nonconformity to start by questioning the relevance of the very categories of conformity and nonconformity—to question indeed the whole vocabulary of current literary discourse. Mr. Aldridge does neither. Like so many self-declared nonconformists, he writes in the idiom of the literary quarterlies, makes all the correct literary judgments and cites the acknowledged pundits, most of them, of course, professors—all this as though he were defying half the world. Yet his many obeisances suggest that the relevant consideration is not whether a man is in or out of the university, or a member of the conformist or the nonconformist party, but whether he has anything new to say. And the direction of those obeisances suggests that the original thought of our time is being made in the universities, often by men who have been accused of conformism.

Professor Riesman, for example, has been called an apologist for conformism. But Mr. Aldridge writes an essay to show how Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* creates an image of our time that no present-day novelist can safely ignore. In two interesting essays, he applies to various novels (Jane Austen, Dostoevsky and Proust in one; Salinger, Bellow and Styron in the other, the best of the volume) Professor Trilling's idea that the notation of class manners is the essential job of the novel, accounting for the substantiality of the novel's rendition of character and society. Trilling's idea also figures in the piece on Riesman and even, I think, in the title and method of a fine piece on Hemingway's ritualism, "The Etiquette of the Berserk." The idea is in fact used as a touchstone of judgment to give the book whatever unity it has—since it would seem to be the loss of class distinctions or manners that has reduced us all to a dreary uniformity or conformity, thus depriving the novelist of his proper subject.

The case raises some amusing complications because Trilling is usually put on the conformist side of things by those who like to divide the world that way, and because Mr. Aldridge defends Trilling, who is in the university, against Delmore Schwartz, who is not. He calls Schwartz a conformist because Schwartz raises the democratic objection to Trilling's concern with class dis-

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tinctions. And he calls this particular essay, "The Heresy of Literary Manners," meaning, I suppose, that in our democratic society it is heresy to have or to broach manners or literary manners (whatever they are). Yet the thing Schwartz conforms to is nonconformist individualism; while if Trilling's idea has any political implication, it is that true individuality emerges from an adherence to convention. The complications suggest that Mr. Aldridge has got tangled up with some modish words that have only the loosest connection with what he really wants to say.

Take as an example the book's title, *In Search of Heresy*. Aside from the fact that the title has not much to do with the book except to give it an appearance of unity, the phrase itself is silly. To search for heresy suggests a frivolousness which would have horrified the great heretics, who were searching not for heresy but for truth. We learn in the introduction, however, that Mr. Aldridge is using *heresy* not so much in the Christian as in the Greek sense, to mean moral choice. "Our democracy in its current form," he says, "gives . . . neither a dogma which might provide a basis for heretical action nor an opportunity to discover and choose a politics or faith or way of life which would represent a heresy of democracy." The problem in that case is not lack of heresy but lack of conviction. Why then confuse the issue with the irrelevant meanings involved in the word *heresy*? Because, one feels, *heresy* is, along with *dogma*, one of the fashionable literary words. Nor does it take one long to feel in reading this book that the thing the author is after is not heresy at all but an idea, any idea which comes marked with the label, "bright, modern, original."

It is because one admires Mr. Aldridge's competence as a critic, and agrees with most of what he is saying, that one minds the lack in this book of the very virtue he is arguing for—genuine conviction. For if you take any idea seriously enough to pursue it back to its roots in experience, originality will take care of itself. And to be original is to be, God knows, in this or any age, sufficiently a nonconformist.

A Vivid Reconstruction

ROOSEVELT: The Lion and the Fox. By James MacGregor Burns. Illustrated. *New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 553 pp. $5.75.*

Reviewed by ASHER B. LANS

In the most perceptive memoir yet written by one of his leading aides, Frances Perkins described Franklin D. Roosevelt as "the most complicated human being" she had ever known. She concluded, however, that "the core of Roosevelt's character was viability—a capacity for . . . growing that remained to his dying day." Professor Burns's biography explores this complexity of character, with studied dispassionateness but an obvious basic sympathy for Roosevelt, in a vivid reconstruction of the President's early career and first two terms. Only cursory treatment is given to the period after the 1940 election. The biography's merits are offset by the author's penchant, despite his preoccupation with day-to-day partisan tactics and his avowed realism, for discussing the problems of Presidential leadership with complete disregard for the realities of American politics. Consequently, no clear picture is given of either the effectiveness or the techniques of Roosevelt's leadership.

As governor of New York from 1928 to 1932, Roosevelt's record was able but undistinguished. As a candidate for the Democratic nomination in 1932, he straddled almost every major issue. The votes necessary for his designation were in large part supplied by William Randolph Hearst, who was misled into believing that the future founder of the United Nations was basically an isolationist. In the national election, Roosevelt again made caution his keynote, and his first Cabinet was a strange assortment of men selected from every segment of his supporters. Yet, the vigor and effectiveness with which executive leadership was exercised, commencing with Inauguration Day, has no parallel in Ameri-

✪ ASHER LANS practices law in New York City. He has lectured at Brooklyn College, Hunter College and City College of New York.

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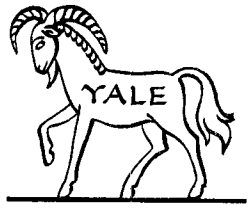

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Once in a very long while, a book appears that casts such a bright light upon the darker forests of human knowledge it breaks through the foliage to show the ground beneath. This is such a book: the first full-dress biography of Henry Marie Brackenridge—author, lawyer, judge, member of Congress, public servant, and international figure. Although in his long and remarkably active life (he lived from 1786 to 1871) Brackenridge never held the highest government offices, his influence, like a fresh wind, drove before him many of the actions his country was to take in its first crucial years. His personality and vigor, in his close friendships with men who did hold more politically important offices in the new nation, illuminated much of the mood of America's self discovery.

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can history except in the first months of Lincoln's first term. (Curiously, Lincoln's presumed caution and his presumed willingness to deal with all groups in his own party was one of the major reasons for his nomination at the 1860 Republican Convention.)

On March 4, 1933, Herbert Hoover lamented privately that the United States was "at the end of our string." Before the close of the following day, his successor, under the dubious authority of emergency legislation enacted during the First World War, had proclaimed a national bank holiday and had convened an emergency Congressional session.

Within six weeks, Roosevelt had secured enactment of new currency controls, which ended the bank runs and permanently strengthened the nation's financial structure, and had obtained legislation to stop farm and home foreclosures. He had secured the first substantial federal appropriations for unemployment relief and had introduced a revolutionary program for farm aid and public works.

Concededly, the New Deal proceeded by means of unrelated legislation conceived on an experimental basis. But this reflected the fact that no consensus, political, popular or academic, existed as to the type of program best calculated to meet the crisis. No doubt, from a historian's standpoint, the presence of a master plan would have been neater. In practice, however, political leaders must work within the limits of the material at hand. In practice, moreover, the *ad hoc* relief and recovery measures kept millions of people from starving and materially restored national confidence and the propensity and capacity for consumer and business spending. Moreover, Roosevelt used the prestige created by his effective reaction to the emergency to obtain adoption of significant long-range legislation—such as the bills establishing the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. He interred the *caveat emptor* of Wall Street with the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and began his program for preserving natural resources through the Civilian Conservation Corps.

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Invocation at the biography's beginning of Machiavelli's familiar fable of the lion and the fox bespeaks an appreciation by the author of the difficulties of sustained political leadership in a democracy. Much lip service is given to this subject. However, the academic abstractness with which Professor Burns hindsightedly decries Roosevelt's first months in office as a jumble of confusion recurs in almost every chapter dealing with his Presidential career. The man who was actually in the White House, confronted almost from the beginning with Congressional opposition, powerful lobbies and public lethargy, is figuratively being measured against an idealized leader, gifted with omniscience and miraculously capable of carrying out all his heart's desires.

For example, the court packing bill is dismissed as a miscalculated political risk which ended in "stunning defeat." Yet by the beginning of 1937, the Supreme Court had once again, to quote Lincoln's description of an earlier political dilemma, made "the doctrine of popular sovereignty as thin as homeopathic soup cooked from the shadow of a pigeon which had starved to death." The power to govern had been denied both the nation and the states. A Constitutional amendment seemed impossible of enactment, and the professor's suggested bill for "moderate court reform" would itself probably have been held unconstitutional. In an interim between his terms of service on the Supreme Court, Charles Evans Hughes had described the Constitution as meaning "what the Judges say it is." When in past eras, holdover Justices frustrated badly needed action by the President and the Congress, Jefferson, Jackson and Lincoln had all responded by seeking to enlarge the Supreme Court. Roosevelt sought but could not obtain similar legislation. In the process, however, he forced the Court to reverse its most recent adverse decisions and caused the Court to abdicate, for all practical purposes, its power of review over economic legislation. Rarely has a "failure" been more effective.

Consider, next, the analysis of F.D.R.'s troubled relations with Congress during his second term. This, of course, is an old theme in American political history. Once re-elected, all the recent strong Presidents—Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson—had confronted similar problems, with equal lack of success. The separation of legislative and executive has a tendency to create Congressional irresponsibility, which the draftsmen of the Constitution did not foresee. Professor Burns suggests that Roosevelt could have cut the Gordian knot by building a "new party behind the New Deal." Unidentified opinion polls are cited as authority for the suggestion that such a third party would have been successful. This analysis glosses over the failure of the purge of Democratic senators in 1938, and the failures of the Wisconsin Progressive and Minnesota Farmer-Labor parties. It does not confront the probability that launching of a third party would have resulted in the triumph of Landon-type Republicans. It ignores the fact that in 1938 and 1939, when foreign policy became crucially important, most so-called "progressives" were isolationists and most of the Southern Democratic "conservatives" had a strong internationalist viewpoint.

The acme of unreality is reached in the brief description of the period preceding our entry into the Second World War. The President, it is asserted, "performed many acts of compromise—perhaps of cowardice." After his re-election in 1940, he reacted to the international crisis with "veering and drifting . . . improvisation and subterfuge." Presumably Professor Burns believes that Roosevelt, in an exercise of strong leadership, should have followed a series of fireside addresses with an attempt to declare war on Germany. There is abundant evidence that Roosevelt was concerned by the limitations of the assistance he was able to give England and Russia. He had, however, to confront the equally uncomfortable fact (mentioned in the book only in passing) that four months before Pearl Harbor the proposal to extend the draft act—the very backbone of our armed forces—was passed in the House of Representatives by only one vote. Burns makes no reference to the strength of the America First movement. He inaccurately sloughs off the unprece-

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Sigmund Mowinckel, one of the world's best-known contemporary biblical theologians, is a native of Norway. Formerly a professor at the Faculty of Theology in the University of Oslo, he retired in 1954. He is a member of several scholarly societies and a contributor to scholarly journals. This is his first book translated into English.

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dented and bitterly opposed Lend Lease Act as something even isolationists conceded was logical.

In an epilogue, it is suggested that Roosevelt's complexity derived from the fact that "he experienced a lingering between two worlds." Having been educated in *noblesse oblige* and simple ethical precepts at Hyde Park, Groton and Harvard, he adapted incompletely to a changing world, without clinging to class or old policies, because he had never been a complete social success and was curious and ambitious. This pseudoscientific characterization is unconvincing. Reflecting on the careers of such contemporaries as Chamberlain, Churchill, Hoover and De Gaulle, one becomes curious as to the identity and wisdom of the other recent political leaders who have totally freed themselves from the past. Are we really supposed to believe that the "C" average Roosevelt had at Groton or his failure to be elected to the Porcellian Club at Harvard had a significant effect on his political thinking?

Professor Burns concludes that, although he was a true happy warrior, Roosevelt as a President was "eventful" rather than "event-making." Translated from academic jargon, this means that he followed rather than led. I can think of no conclusion which is more completely contradicted by the record.

Brief Comments

NEW LIVES FOR OLD. By Margaret Mead. *Morrow. $6.75.*

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by new ideas brought in by war and American soldiers, threw out their shell money, dog's teeth, grass skirts, dancing spears and the skulls that harbored ghostly supervisors. They exchanged fear, anger and strangling financial obligations for a happier "New Way of Thinking."

Miss Mead went back to Peri Village, in Manus, a small island off the northeastern part of New Guinea, where she had done her pioneering field work in 1928. The role of the anthropologist and the native were in some ways reversed. She became the informant, eagerly questioned by community leaders that she had known as children twenty-five years before in the water wonderland of Peri, on how to make the new Western democracy work.

Those readers interested mostly in the story can pick up the arrival in Peri, Chapter II, skip to the vivid part on New Peri, Chapter X, and then pick up historical flashbacks (largely summaries or excerpts from the 1930 publication, *Growing Up in New Guinea*) as needed for perspective. The running commentary on changes in Peri reveals the progress of an important anthropological inquiry into the relationship between personality and institutions, and expertly shows certain types of childhood experience that may have prepared the Manus to revolutionize their adult way of life.

The next time the question arises on what theoretical expectations anthropology offers and how much can be predicted about social change, this book can be offered for answers. Perhaps both the Manus and anthropology have come of age.

SYDNEY CONNOR

MAN'S ROLE IN CHANGING THE FACE OF THE EARTH. Edited by William L. Thomas, Jr., with the collaboration of Carl O. Sauer, Marston Bates and Lewis Mumford. *University of Chicago. $12.50.*

This voluminous work is the record of an international symposium organized by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and held at Princeton in June, 1955. It contains papers submitted by fifty-three scholars and summaries of the ideas discussed by seventy participants during the symposium meetings. The volume is at once an accessible record of man's impress upon the physical and biological character of this planet, a review of techniques (past, present and prospective) available to him for further modification, and a consideration of the possible limitations of both man and the earth. Inherent in the above, of course, is the volume's inestimable value as both a compass and a seedbed for the next generation of research scholars.

Anthropology and its less glamorous cousin, human ecology, seem at times, of course, to be all things to all men. The breadth of formal academic disciplines (twenty-four) represented by the contributors to the volume gives some color to the charge, although the papers are remarkably free of both parochial language and viewpoints. This fact gives credence and justification to the Foundation's decision to select contributors and participants as individuals first, and only incidentally as disciplinarians. This approach receives further vindication in the excellent summaries of the symposiums. While there is no doubt that the participants are scholars, there is, if possible, even less doubt that the persons are twentieth-century philosophers with an abiding concern for man's future. His problems and resources are elucidated clearly, and with surprising unanimity.

RICHARD D. SHAKESHAFT

PELICAN IN THE WILDERNESS. By F. Fraser Darling. *Random House. $5.00.*

When we think of land being destroyed by overgrazing and soil mismanagement, the examples that most readily come to mind are our own dust-blown plains, the desolated areas in the Middle East, Spain and Greece, and in China and India, where overpopulation and overuse have left the land devastated. It is somewhat surprising to find that rain-blessed England and Scotland also have sections where unwise use of land has ravaged the good soil.

F. Fraser Darling is an English ecologist who has faced the truth as he sees it about land use. Put in very general terms, this

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inescapable and uncomfortable truth is that land cannot support flora and fauna which it is not suited for. When it is pressed into unnatural uses by economic or administrative pressure, the result is a complete upset of the ecological balance.

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GORDON CUYLER

IN SILENCE I SPEAK. By George N. Shuster. *Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. $4.50.*

With rich detail and historical perspective, Dr. Shuster has written a series of discursive essays on the techniques and results of Communist rule in Hungary. The career, resistance and imprisonment of Cardinal Mindszenty are described at length and with warm sympathy. Several other themes, however, are set forth with fresher insight.

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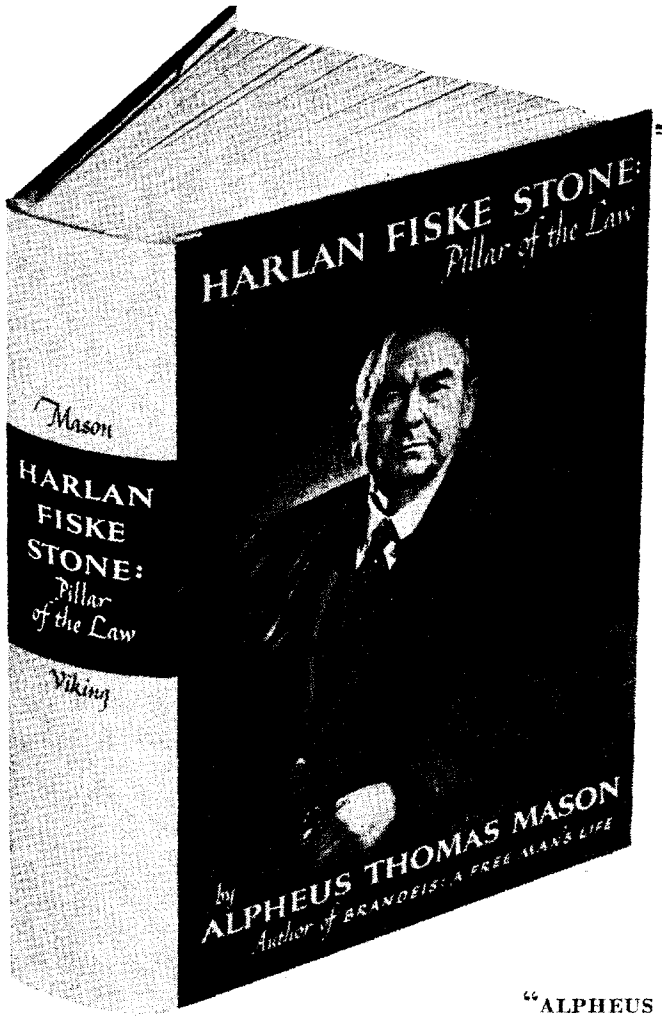

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This book's most novel passages describe the concordats which the Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist hierarchies consummated with the Communist government and which "committed the church in Hungary to acceptance of the regime" to the confusion of peasants and workers. In part, the surrender originated in the desire of the church for permission to continue its pastoral functions.

Writing prior to the recent uprising, Dr. Shuster suggested Cardinal Mindszenty's "moral power" might again become politically important. Current developments indicate that the miracle may become a reality.

ASHER LANS

THE MEANING OF YALTA. Edited by John L. Snell. *Louisiana State University.* $3.75.

Although the essential facts concerning Yalta were known for years, the passage of time and the publication of official records afforded the authors of this book an opportunity to reassess this conference in proper historical perspective and to dispel the distortions and exaggerations commonly associated with it.

Of the four problems (Germany, Poland, the UN, and the Far East) discussed at Yalta, the Western leaders made no major commitments on Germany and secured a Soviet pledge to establish a free and independent Polish government—an agreement which was soon violated by the Soviets. The decisions on the votes and vetoes in the UN were necessary compromises to insure the Big Three unity which was indispensable to world peace. In regard to the Far East, however, the authors seem to agree that in spite of the need of Soviet aid against Japan to shorten the war and save American lives, "there is no real defense on moral grounds" of the territorial concessions made to the Soviet Union.

I-KUA CHOU

RUSSIA LEAVES THE WAR: Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920. Volume I. By George F. Kennan. *Princeton University.* $7.50.

This volume is the first in a series of works by George Kennan which will analyze Soviet-American relations following the establishment of the Bolshevik regime in 1917. It covers particularly the period, toward the end of World War I, between the assumption of power from the Provisional Government by the Soviets and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The analysis proceeds upon two closely interrelated planes: first, there is a description of the mechanics of diplomatic intercourse with close attention paid to the dominant personalities in the respective governments both in Washington and Moscow; and second, a treatment of the respective national policies which were developed in that time of trouble. Both of these investigations are detailed and extensive, and show us with instructive clarity the tasks and problems of the profession with which Mr. Kennan has been long associated. The emphasis is upon the causes and effects of the business of international diplomacy.

Although the author states that this is a more complete treatment than heretofore available of the specific subject of the relationship of the United States to Soviet Russia during the period, it is not this which makes the book so worthwhile as is the inclusion of intimate administrative detail. It is the book of a specialist, covering a short period of history; but because it is so well constructed it can be recommended for all persons interested in tracing the lineage of the outstanding problem of our time—the relationship of the United States to the U.S.S.R.

W. H. CHAPMAN

REINHOLD NIEBUHR: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought. Edited by Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall. *Macmillan.* $6.50.

The voice of Reinhold Niebuhr, American prophet and surveyor of mankind, has been heard outside seminary walls for almost three decades now. Here, in one volume, are gathered the bouquets and the demurs of some contemporary professors of thought—happily, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Paul Tillich among them.

In an opening autobiographical sally, Dr. Niebuhr describes himself as a circuit

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rider in the colleges and universities, a champion of Christian faith in a secular age, particularly among Christianity's intellectual despisers. The thoughtful reader as yet unacquainted with Reinhold Niebuhr can get the heft and scope of the man in these criticisms representing most current points of view. Niebuhr's characteristic prophetism bleeds through. Also in view are his criticism of the capacity of people or institutions to transcend self-interest; his scorn of a sentimental optimism, relying upon the native dignity and decency of men without realizing how evil even good men can be; his acceptance of conflict as both a consequence of power and its antidote in a competitive society; his awareness that religion's proper social role is not to endorse so much as to question, to inculcate a sense of humility more than infallibility. In these critiques you will find not the man but the ideas which concerned the man who bore them.

R.W. BARNES

CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY. By I. M. Bocheński. Translated from the German by Donald Nicholl and Karl Aschenbrenner. *University of California. $5.00.*

Dr. Bocheński's commendable survey work on contemporary European philosophy, the result of lectures given before American GI's during 1945-46 and first published in Berne in 1947, has long been needed. It includes and moves beyond the existentialists, at the same time supplying a review of the philosophical background out of which the contemporary European philosophies developed.

The basic assumption of the book proposes that "modern" philosophy, spanning the centuries from 1600 to 1900, has terminated, and the Continental philosophers are developing fertile ideas and concepts to attempt "to answer the concrete and pressing questions of human existence as such." The reader who has studied philosophy in an American university dominated by the scientific tradition will be impressed by the richness and scope of contemporary European philosophy. He may be repulsed by the arrogant and presumptuous claims of the semanticists and the logical positivists (to possess the sole philosophical methodology) whose positions are clearly stated by the author.

The limitation of the book is obvious and one for which the author begs pardon; to compress so many systems within a survey work necessitates serious amputations. Dr. Bocheński's comprehensive bibliography is probably one of his most valuable contributions.

ROBERT TURVENE

DE LA SOUVERAINETÉ. By Bertrand de Jouvenel. Editions Génin. *Paris: Librairie de Médicis. $4.95.*

This is the second volume of the French political philosopher's *Summa*, following his *Du Pouvoir* after an interval of ten years. That book was translated as *On Power* in 1949, and undoubtedly, the new work too will eventually appear in an English edition to swell the lengthening list of neoconservative writings, from Kirk to Viereck, from Lippmann to Toynbee.

The question raised by Albert Camus in *The Rebel*, "Is it possible to find a rule of conduct outside the realm of religion and its absolute values?" is answered in the negative by De Jouvenel. Yet he remains, again like Camus, inconsistently faithful to his own secularist upbringings: to him, it seems possible to believe in *absoluta* and still be a humanist "agnostic." After a long, closely argued inquiry into the problems of authority, he comes to the conclusion that the total loss of liberty can be averted only by a limiting of total liberty. This may not strike the reader as a very startling discovery. What makes it relevant, nonetheless, is the fact that it may signal, if De Jouvenel be typical, another ascendancy of a foreign intellectual influence in France. After the defeats of Napoleon I and III, the French intelligentsia turned to Germany for intellectual salvation (Madame De Staël, Renan; De Jouvenel, in the wake of the most recent French debacle, has been orienting himself toward England and this country. His work may be viewed as an attempt to reconcile the French radical tradition

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with the principles of Anglo-Saxon liberal democracy. The key word is *self-limitation.*

JAMES H. MEISEL

AN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY: Problems and Prospects. By Gunnar Myrdal. *Harper. $6.50.*

This work is a thorough and informative discussion of the problems presented to the world by its underdeveloped economies. Myrdal, a scholar and administrator, who has been a university professor, Swedish Minister of Commerce, and is now Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, is well prepared to discuss them.

It is refreshing to read a book in which the emphasis is not on one stock problem. The reader is not asked to believe that if only a certain problem were solved, all the others would in short order solve themselves. However, while obvious prescriptions are avoided, Myrdal does indicate the directions in which he feels solutions to some of the problems lie. The unpleasant aspects of the national policies of various countries do not escape attention, yet credit is given where due. Regrettably, because the guilt is so widely diffused, it is possible to finish reading this work without the uncomfortable feeling experienced upon completion of *An American Dilemma.*

An International Economy is exceptional from the methodological point of view; the author's value premises, his biases and his definitions of terms are discussed before the main body of the work is begun. Since it is much easier to relate his thoughts to one's own set of value premises when the ground rules are clearly defined, it facilitates thinking about the problems. Myrdal also offers those who disagree with him much to reinforce their views; for all the difficult problems which are raised are by their nature not susceptible to ready or easy solution.

FRANK VAN BRUNT

CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM. By John Strachey. *Random House. $5.00.*

John Strachey was an *enfant terrible* of British socialism during the thirties. The following decade saw him transformed from left-wing theorist into a highly responsible and effective cabinet minister. The Labor defeats of the fifties have provided Strachey with the leisure to resume his original role.

Contemporary Capitalism is the first of a series which Strachey anticipates writing upon the problems of "contemporary socialism." In this volume, he discusses economics. An unrepentant Marxist, Strachey is willing to admit Marx's crucial error of prognostication—the theory of increasing misery—but is quick to add that Marx did correctly analyze the basic tendency of capitalism to accumulate an ever-growing surplus into fewer and fewer hands. The "latest stage" of oligopolistic capitalism, with its industrial giants and absence of real competition, is cited in proof. Where Marx went astray, Strachey tells us, was in his failure to anticipate the role of political democracy in enabling the working class to maintain—though with difficulty—its share of the increase in production.

Strachey sees a threat to democratic institutions in the nature of present-day capitalism. While democracy tends to diffuse power among the many, he says, oligopolistic capitalism tends to concentrate it. Either democracy, using Keynesian techniques, must learn to transform, and ultimately to transcend capitalism or it will be destroyed by capitalism, he warns.

Strachey's skillful analysis, reinforced by a vigorous style, makes for stimulating reading. However, we must wait for a fuller picture of his theoretical system before this part of it can fairly be submitted to judgment.

BERNARD SEMMEL

THE NEGRO POTENTIAL. By Eli Ginzberg. *Columbia University. $3.00.*

In this latest study from the Conservation of Human Resources Project at Columbia University, Professor Ginzberg and his associates have provided a refreshing contrast to the current analyses and evaluations of the status of the Negro in American society. A review of the failure to utilize fully the Negro potential in our economic

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life, and the basic economic and educational reasons which underlie this American failure, it stands in sharp contrast to much of the recent debate on and misstatement of the subject. Here is a study which draws together experience gained from integration in the Armed Forces, understanding of academic opportunities and achievements in Negro education both in the North and the South.

While the study builds a strong and impressive case for those who believe that the advances made by Negroes in the United States during the past fifteen years are attributable to the expansion and development of our national economy, there is room for questioning the lack of consideration given to the political implication of having large segments of Negro citizens unable to participate in local, state and federal democracy by exercising their voting franchise. Illiteracy, a factor which the study carefully documents, is an important element in the inability of the Negro citizen to bring his views to bear on the political life of the community. The broad political and economic overtones of this failure in our democracy are not analyzed.

This study, which speaks frankly to Negro and White alike in clear, readable terms, is an important contribution in setting the guidelines and the goals.

WILLIAM B. WELSH

THE REPUBLICANS: A History of Their Party. By Malcolm Moos. *Random House. $5.95.*

Mr. Moos, an established academician and an active Republican, has compiled a history of a major party and a sincere evaluation of its present status and future potential. Such a history is, of necessity, closely interwoven with the history of the nation and its social and economic state. The huge dimensions involved in such a study make many of its details seem almost trivial and disconcerting, but they do enliven what might otherwise be a dull, academic recital of events.

Of most interest in this election year are those chapters dealing with the contemporary scene. They provide important insight as to how a well-informed young Republican views his party today, as well as a very handy compilation of the many current theories, poll results and opinions so generously expounded by the mass media during the last three elections.

Mr. Moos is an advocate of strong party alignment and regrets the passing of the patronage bond for cementing party membership. He feels that the Republican party must practice moderation and solidify itself at the local levels by avoiding depersonalization of local politics. He pleads a strong case for the professional politician who, as the author sees him, is best equipped to fend off the paralyzing effects of special-interest pressure groups and able to keep party strength and loyalty foremost. The party must not be hampered by conceding power to public relations experts who gain quick but not always lasting victories. It must utilize all the resources within itself to reach realistically its objectives and gain the needed membership to achieve once more real majority status.

ETHEL M. CASE

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT: The Triumph. By Frank Freidel. *Little, Brown. $6.00.*

Nobody doubts any longer that Freidel's *Roosevelt* is destined to rank as an important biography. The question now is: Will it be a great one? That question is not answered by this third volume, which brings Roosevelt only as far as the Presidency. But the first three volumes leave open the possibility that this may be a great biography, for they are marked by all the secondary characteristics of a great work—inexhaustible industry, thorough scholarship, a lucid, succinct and pleasant style. The combination is enough to produce a good book, and this is unquestionably a good one; but one thing more is necessary to produce a great one, to wit, comprehension of not only the subject, but also of the environment in which he acted. The test will come in Freidel's treatment of Roosevelt as President, for, after all, if the man had proceeded no further than the governor-

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ship of New York, he would not be worth three volumes, much less five or six. If Freidel's comprehension of the America of 1932 is equal to the task, his book will be a classic; but that remains to be seen.

GERALD W. JOHNSON

THE PRESIDENCY TODAY. By Edward S. Corwin and Louis W. Koenig. *New York University. $3.00.*

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY. By Clinton Rossiter. *Harcourt, Brace. $2.95.*

These absorbing volumes, dealing with a subject of perennial interest, approach it from very different points of view. Professors Corwin and Koenig believe that the Presidency must be carefully re-examined. They trace the growth of Presidential powers, note that in times of crisis these powers become dictatorial, and point out that chronic crises seem to be here to stay. Thus, while the authors recognize the necessity of swift and decisive action in emergencies, they reason that we can no longer afford to rely on Presidential dictatorship at such times and risk the permanent diminution and eclipse of the legislative branch. Observing that Congressional recalcitrance fosters Presidential autocracy, they outline a proposal for a Cabinet made up of legislative leaders and department heads as a means of restraining the President while increasing his influence in Congress.

Professor Rossiter, in his long but lively survey of the office, does not deny that the President may be a dictator in times of war. Conceding that better relations between the President and Congress should be sought, he recommends improved structure and procedures in Congress itself, an experiment with an item veto for appropriations bills, and does not reject the Corwin proposal for a new kind of Cabinet. But on the whole he does not favor meddling with the present system, primarily on the ground that it has worked very well so far, and partly on the questionable assumption that those who criticize the built-in antagonism between the President and Congress necessarily advocate shifting to a parliamentary system.

Both books assume that the Presidency will continue to expand its powers. But whereas Professors Corwin and Koenig are apprehensive lest the constitutional, political and social restraints that have kept it in check heretofore not be sufficient in new conditions, Professor Rossiter views with equanimity a Presidency that will become still stronger as America becomes increasingly involved in the affairs of all mankind. As for who is right, only the future can tell.

ELIZABETH FRAZEE

THE COURSE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT. By Ralph Henry Gabriel. Second edition. *Ronald. $6.00.*

What is the desirable relation of the individual to the society of which he is a part and what is his relation to the mystery that envelops him? How Americans have answered these questions is the basis for this extended study into the pattern of American political traditions.

Three basic beliefs have held the faith of Americans: first, the dignity of each man and the necessary corollary of his freedom; second, the existence of fundamental law applicable to all men; and third, the mission of the United States to lead the world to democratic practices. A strong faith in these ideas, so evident in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Americans first turned their attention primarily to North America, Professor Gabriel finds again today in the United States now that it has taken its place as a world leader.

These tenets have not gone unchallenged and cannot be said to have remained unchanged in meaning or interpretation between the two periods. Indeed, they have been espoused by opposing causes just as during the Civil War. By drawing from the writings of perhaps forty men prominent in wide fields—jurists, educators, statesmen, scientists, economists, and most heavily from the clergy because of the commingling of Christian doctrine and democratic principles—the author traces this evolution. His biographical sketches developing the background for each man's thought make for sympathetic presentation of divergent views and show refreshing scholarship.

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The casual reader as well as the scholar should find much absorbing material in this new edition. As a history, it is alive with the people who lived it; as a social study, it is penetrating. Professor Gabriel does not stop with such material, however. When he chooses to set forth personal answers, his guidance is illuminating.

HELEN W. NIES

FREEDOM'S FETTERS: The Alien and Sedition Laws and American Civil Liberties. By James Morton Smith. *Cornell University.* $5.00.

Mr. Smith tells how and why a Federalist Congress adopted the notorious laws, and describes in interesting detail individual sedition trials of Republican editors, a Congressman and others. Exploiting xenophobia and "nativism" aggravated by near war with France, the Federalists sought to identify the Adams Administration with the United States government and with the Constitution and to render Republican criticism subversive and treasonable. The effort boomeranged, and Jefferson's "revolution" of 1801 soon brought the death of the Federalist party and established the American political process—the freedom of critical political opposition by speech and press.

The story is well told and valuable. And Mr. Smith, a partisan on the side of liberty, may perhaps be forgiven if his presentation is occasionally less than impartial. (One would not guess that in some measure the Constitutional arguments of the Federalists have prevailed; and it should be made clearer that Republican opposition to the Alien and Sedition Laws was not wholly libertarian, but also one part partisan and several parts States' rights.) More might also have been said of other features of the complex scene of the time.

Some may seek in this history encouragement that repression must fail and repressors be defeated. Others may find instead warrant for despair at history's repeating itself. The author has "resisted any temptation to belabor" modern parallels. The common factors are obvious, even to the "half war," then with France. But the differences are perhaps even more weighty, and the reader might well emulate Mr. Smith's resistence. Still, the story should be read and recalled for comfort and for aid against hysteria in the wake of national emergency.

LOUIS HENKIN

ELI WHITNEY AND THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY. By Constance McL. Green. *Little, Brown.* $3.50.

The title of this readable little book in "The Library of American Biography" series states its theme. In accordance with the dictum of the editor that "the proper problem for the biographer is to assess the role of men in history," Mrs. Green has met with notable success, and her achievement is the more commendable within the restricted compass of two hundred pages. Although throughout the book she portrays Whitney in relation to the new American republic's assertion of economic independence, the man is never obscured by his times or by the intricacies of the technology which he developed. Mrs. Green keeps before the reader the human side of the story and builds up an element of suspense in the personal details of Whitney's life. As for the technological aspects of his career, they are sketched in passages of lucid expository writing that bespeak the author's characteristic economy of words.

Industrial history is concerned in part with the interaction of economic theories and practice, with men's awareness of the principles which they discover or only demonstrate for someone else to formulate and apply. The well-considered emphasis given to these factors against the background of American economic and social life of Whitney's day points up the significance of both his failure and his success.

Eli Whitney was never lost to history as the inventor of the cotton gin, but his significance as one of America's early mechanical geniuses has been little understood until recently. Mrs. Green acknowledges, of course, the full-length biography by Jeanette Mirsky and Allan Nevins (1952);

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but this volume of hers is no less valuable, in literary quality as well as content, for assessing the role of Whitney in history.

LESTER J. CAPPON

FUR HUNTERS OF THE FAR WEST. By Alexander Ross. Edited by Kenneth Spaulding. *University of Oklahoma. $5.00.*

The first edition of this work was published in London in 1855. The present printing, an entirely new edition, is based on the original manuscript of Alexander Ross subsequent to his service as a member, in succession, of the Pacific Fur Company (an Astor enterprise), the Northwest Company, and the Hudson's Bay Company during the years 1810-1825. The manuscript, found in the Coe Collection of the Yale University Library, has been meticulously followed—the only exceptions to a literal reproduction having been corrections of misspellings and alterations of such punctuation marks as would otherwise have obscured the meaning of the text.

Ross was the leader of a contingent of traders in the Oregon and Rocky Mountain areas, and his narrative embodies keen and penetrating observations regarding not only many of his untrustworthy—even malicious—companions, but also concerning the flora and fauna of an area within portions of the present states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana. There is also first-hand information concerning the whims and caprices of various Indian tribes and the significant part played by the calumet of peace—the pipe—in White-Indian relations. We are able, in short, to experience vicariously the adventures of the last British fur traders on the periphery of what was shortly to be the United States frontier.

CLARENCE E. CARTER

THE SEARCH FOR CAPTAIN SLOCUM. By Walter Magnes Teller. Illustrated. *Scribner's. $3.95.*

On April 24, 1895, Captain Joshua Slocum sailed out of Boston harbor in the *Spray*, a small castoff which measured 36 feet, 9 inches, her gross tonnage just under 13 tons. On June 27, 1898, the Captain came home, the first man to have sailed around the world alone. The measure and importance of this feat are still discussed in sailing circles. Some insight into the motivation behind such an accomplishment has been available in the lasting product of his voyage, a book entitled simply *Sailing Alone Around the World*, a sea classic of such appeal that it is still being read and published in both England and America. Now, out of this search through letters, friends, family, newspaper accounts, et cetera, for Captain Slocum the man, comes a study in frustration and fulfillment of a sailor-author-escapist which fills the requirements of the best in biography. Although Mr. Teller allows himself the full freedom of speculation regarding the true nature of his subject, at no point does he bend him to fit a ready-made mold.

Mr. Teller deserves great credit for what he has done in this book, as well as a reprimand for his prefatory statement: "Slocum was a man so tied to a time, and that time so gone, that we can surely say: he will never live again. His type . . . has vanished from the earth forever." For as long as there are men, there will be a Slocum, a solitary Ulysses, who will strike out across the uncharted areas of the sea, the stratosphere, the land or the mind for the answers to those questions which give him his passion for being. And, hopefully, there will be men who will understand him and see the importance in writing about him.

BETSY SAUNDERS

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO LITERATURE. By David Daiches. *Prentice-Hall. $6.50.*

Ours has been called an Age of Criticism, and warring schools of theory and practice fill our literary publications with their conflict. In *Critical Approaches to Literature*, a work of even greater range than his earlier books, David Daiches sets out to quell much of this controversy.

The first and largest of the three sections discusses the answers which representative critics from Plato to Brooks have given to the question: What is the nature of imaginative literature; what is its use and value?

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The second section considers "the different ways in which specific works of literary art have been and can be evaluated." The final section examines the way the literary critic's work touches that of the scholar, the psychologist and the sociologist.

With perception, tolerance and integrated learning, Mr. Daiches strikes a stout blow for literary sanity by his well-supported emphasis on the need to avoid the parochial and, with no loss of rigor, "blend the insights yielded by many critical approaches."

In addition to being informed and sensible, the book is extremely readable.

CARVEL COLLINS

THE RAVEN AND THE WHALE: The War of Words and Wits in the Era of Poe and Melville. By Perry Miller. *Harcourt, Brace. $6.75.*

Mr. Miller's vigorous and intimately detailed drama presents in four acts, a prologue and an epilogue, twenty-four acrimonious and obsessive years—from 1833 to 1857—in the literary annals of America, and more especially of New York. For while the critical interests of New England and, to a degree, of the South, through William Gilmore Simms, are reflected here, New York is the focus of his account of mid-nineteenth-century America's deeply ironic quest for its own identity.

Though Mr. Miller defines Melville's role as that of a minor supporting actor, he is the real, indeed Promethean, hero of the book. Minor though he may be, he dwarfs Poe, as whale does raven, in the handling of the plot. The plot is the thesis that "a Republic may abandon the artist not because of his aberration but because of its own." In this instance, the aberration is the "nation's distraction over the problem of comprehending its own identity." The reason for Melville's ultimate popular failure in his own time is partly his being a tragic victim of such distraction; but Mr. Miller shrewdly warns against oversimplification, admitting that Melville may have shared the confusions of his age, whose terms were the only terms he could comprehend, whose dilemmas he could not resolve. The examination of this thesis in the foreground of editorial tempers and temperaments is immensely provocative.

Mr. Miller persistently disparages cultists. But while he disclaims appraisal of Melville, in a book of literary history not of literary criticism, and assigns him a place as "minor actor," the fourth and longest part is called "A Greater than Shakespeare?" Some ambiguities reside in the query, and in its answer, but the most ardent admirer could hardly ask for more.

FRASER NEIMAN

D. H. LAWRENCE: Novelist. By F. R. Leavis. *Knopf. $4.75.*

Dr. Leavis, director of English studies at Cambridge University, is a devoted champion of the cause of D. H. Lawrence. His first partisan defense appeared in 1930, and he has been doing battle intermittently ever since, chiefly in the pages of his literary journal, *Scrutiny*. In this attempt to place Lawrence alongside other major novelists, Dr. Leavis stresses those characteristics of his writing which have not been widely acknowledged: his humor, technical mastery, broad sociological understanding, ability to create character. The central portion of the book is devoted to an extended discussion of *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, as well as of *St. Mawr* and some of the shorter tales. From these, he has given generous quotations and provided close textual commentary.

The book begins and ends with stinging rebukes of T. S. Eliot, whom Dr. Leavis concedes to be the leading figure in English literary criticism, and who has categorized Lawrence as an ignorant, undisciplined man, no fit occupant of a good seat in the traditional church. Against such an opponent, Dr. Leavis is, unhappily, ill-equipped: the gracelessness of his prose style is no match for the felicity of Eliot's. This seems a pity, for Dr. Leavis' deeply felt and soundly reasoned arguments deserve at least equal time in any discussion of Lawrence's rightful place in literature.

JOAN CUYLER

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The Reader Replies . . . . . .

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington 9, D. C. Because of limitations of space, we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*

—EDITOR

Anniversary Issue

I read the Autumn issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR with interest, as I do all issues. However, it disturbed me that no one mentioned the exquisitely written "The Judgment of the Birds" by Dr. Loren Eiseley [AS: Spring, 1956] as being an outstanding piece of prose. Here is the perfect marriage of wisdom and imagination that results in genius! When men of science write so beguilingly, it partially mitigates some of the irresponsibility of the so-called "applied" scientists who labor to perfect greater weapons of destruction.

And Dr. Harlow Shapley's article, "Man's Fourth Adjustment" [AS: Autumn, 1956], was beautifully lucid and provocative. Men like Dr. Eiseley, Dr. Shapley and Dr. Fromm create a spiritual climate for the reverence of existence.

SYLVIA DORDICK
Woodstock, New York

* * *

I was saddened to read in your Autumn number portions of the article by Professor Redding on "The Meaning of Bandung." I have a high respect for Professor Redding's character and attainments, but I do believe that what he says about the *New York Times* is unfair and that what he says about the American press in general is deeply mistaken.

I can testify that the *Times* took particular pains to get good coverage of the Bandung Conference. The excerpts from speeches which we ran were not "carefully selected for their anti-Communist slant." They were selected for their news value.

It is true the news value of the Bandung Conference did seem to us to lie in its refusal to go along with the Communist doctrine. Editorially, we on this newspaper have felt that the Communist activities in the Far East are just as imperialistic as those of the Western nations admittedly used to be. We believe that the Western nations have at least shown repentance and a change of mind in withdrawing from India and Pakistan, from Burma and Ceylon and from the Philippines. The Dutch gave up Indonesia reluctantly, but they did give it up. The French gave up Indochina under pressure, but they did give it up.

Editorially, we on the *Times* take particular exception to some of the undertones of Professor Redding's article. Why should he call the word *alleged* in our reference to racial issues at Bandung "a Swiftian stroke"? He cannot have failed to note that we gave due weight in our news dispatches and in our comment to the references made to racialism and colonialism by Sir John Kotelawala and Carlos Romulo. We know and respect both of these men. Can Professor Redding really believe that not only this newspaper but the press in general knew the facts about the Bandung attacks on racialism and colonialism but, as he put it, "kept them from the Western public"?

I am particularly distressed because it is my belief that Professor Redding, on his record, is basically not very far from the point of view we have tried to express editorially in the *Times*. Our Far Eastern editorials are generally written by a man who lived and worked in the Philippines and in India and whose friendships are not condi-

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tioned by the pigmentation of anybody's skin. Editorially, over a long period of years, we have tried to inform our readers as to racial problems in the modern world. We have urged white Americans to treat their colored brethren and fellow citizens on a basis of complete equality.

We have done this not merely as a matter of political wisdom at home and abroad, although we believe it is that, but as a matter of common decency and of common sense. We would not support some of the fanatical outbursts of nationalism that have taken place among colored populations, but we would be equally opposed to similar extremes of nationalism among white populations. We do our level best to secure, publish and edit the news without discrimination of any kind, and we try to think and write about the world's problems editorially in the spirit of human brotherhood.

This letter has been read by the editorial writer to whom I have referred and also by our editor-in-chief, neither of whom objected to the positions it takes. The form of expression is, of course, my own, as was the impulse to write the letter.

R. L. DUFFUS
Editorial Department
The *New York Times*

* * *

In a chest containing memorabilia of many components, I have, of course, various Phi Beta Kappa treasures. In view of this twenty-fifth anniversary year, of particular interest is "An Announcement," in booklet form, of the beginning of the SCHOLAR.

Because of gaps in my copies, I decided to ascertain whether all volumes are available in San Francisco. To this end, I went first to the Mechanics' Mercantile Library of which I am a member. It is a library having its roots in the early history of San Francisco and highly esteemed throughout our "Bay Region." I was told at the reference desk that the library's subscription did not begin until 1953, and that all but current issues are in a locked room, their binding within the next five years dependent upon the number of inquiries received. They are, I assume, available only for reading in the library.

According to the librarian, the nearest source of all volumes is my university's library at Berkeley. I went there the next evening and found that it does indeed have every issue. The first three volumes were delivered to me from the stacks. Each was bound separately.

The following evening I went to San Francisco's main public library and learned that its subscription began in 1945. It combines two volumes in one binding. These bound volumes are kept in a section of the periodical room accessible only to the librarian. He brought me the first bound volume,"XIV-XV, 1945-1946" and stressed that he would gladly bring me others.

I have purposely dwelt upon the library phase of the SCHOLAR for it seems to me so important that the reading public be made increasingly aware of its existence.

EVELYN G. PULLEN
San Francisco, California

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I found Mr. Redding's article "The Meaning of Bandung" most stimulating and interesting, but his reference to "Spain's [unlearned lesson] in Goa" is incorrect. Goa is a possession of Portugal.

BERNARD SINSHEIMER
Los Angeles, California

* * *

I want to add my own word to the many compliments which I am sure you have received on the twenty-fifth anniversary issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. This is one of the most interesting issues I have ever received and I think I have read every word in it. All of the issues are good, but this one is super.

EVERETT R. SMITH
Bronxville, New York

* * *

Your publication is always stimulating and delightful and the twenty-fifth anniversary number was no exception. The symposiums were truly the highlight of this issue. If it were in my power to award a laurel wreath for the best contribution by any of your correspondents it would undoubtedly go to Miss Mary E. Cooley of Ann Arbor, Michigan, for the following six-word sentence: "Some of the poetry is

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intelligible." This is the most accurate and descriptive commentary I have ever read and for succinctness it is worthy of the Nobel Prize.

ALBERT L. WECHSLER
New York, New York

Theological Conflicts

The article by Gustave Weigel, S.J., "Catholic and Protestant Theologies in Outline" [AS: Summer, 1956], is an ironic statement. It is, as he says, an almost impossible, yet necessary, task. But it is difficult to be impartial. Apart, therefore, from minor sources of irritation which can be overlooked, I detect six flaws.

1. The subtle error of comparing incomparables is present. Father Weigel selects individual Protestant theologians for consideration, but makes a uniform statement about Roman Catholicism as though there were no variations among its contemporary theologians.

2. There is a typical Roman Catholic refusal to see continuity in Protestantism, recognizing it only in the papal allegiance. The parable with which Father Weigel introduces his essay is a case of special pleading which is profoundly untrue.

3. His analysis of the church-state problem in both groups is incredibly naïve. To assert that it is an abstract issue to Roman Catholics is belied by current active efforts of the Holy See to gain a privileged position, especially in the United States. And to state that Protestants by and large *deplore* legal establishment ignores the relationship of England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, as well as the Netherlands, to their Protestant state churches.

4. To neglect, even in a short essay, the extensive Protestant "high church" developments is regrettable. Because of them the restriction of the term *Catholic* to the Roman obedience is both unrealistic and tendentious. Other important forces not mentioned are the explication of "common grace" in Dutch Calvinism and the revival of monasticism among French Reformed Protestants.

5. More serious is Father Weigel's failure to acknowledge deviations in the Roman faith which threaten the purity of Catholic doctrine. The novel exaltation of the Blessed Virgin and of the papal monarchy endangers the central dogmas of traditional Christian belief. The encroachments of popular devotions not heartily approved by Roman theologians tend to obscure even the Mass. (I cannot forget a recent remark. To a casual expression of good luck, a young Roman Catholic replied, "I'm keeping my fingers crossed and saying novenas!") There is, moreover, a perilous ambiguity in the administration of penance and of the rules governing marriage, divorce and remarriage. Although legalistically correct, there is a great deal of moral laxity. The prominence of casuistry is displayed in recognizing Protestant baptism in the church's matrimonial courts while discrediting it by imposing "conditional baptism" indiscriminately upon all converts (at least in the United States).

6. The most vitiating flaw in Father Weigel's article is his unwillingness or inability to define what he means by Protestantism. Surely he is not as unfair as the military services were during World War II, when he who was not a Roman Catholic or a Jew was deemed a "Protestant," but the essay implicitly perpetuates that injustice. Most Southern Baptists vigorously and with good reason disclaim the title of Protestant. Unitarians, Mormons, Russellites, Christian Scientists and Quakers are not Protestants, possibly not even Christians. Methodists are not Protestants in the same sense that Episcopalians are. And many Episcopalians, despite the official name of their denomination, are uneasy about that designation.

Whatever the difficulty, Father Weigel should have attempted to clarify his terminology. Definition is not as impossible as he might suppose. There are simple classifications which contribute toward a fair definition. First, the division into liberals and conservatives, with the vast bulk of the indifferent between those two. In part, Father Weigel admits that distinction but makes inadequate use of it. There is a broad gulf, however, between Anglican Latitudinarians

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and Anglo-Catholics, Associate Reformed Presbyterians and USA Presbyterians, Disciples and Southern Baptists, Missouri Synod Lutherans and United Lutherans, premillenarians and nonmillenarians.

Another method which aids to establish a definition (or definitions) of Protestantism is to group the denominational divisions in logical categories. The Presbyterian-Reformed churches, and perhaps the Congregational, have so much in common as to warrant considering them together. Baptists and Disciples have characteristic similarities. Methodists and Anglicans are relatively alike, at least in organization and ethos. The Lutheran and Evangelical bodies have basic agreements. And the multiplicity of Pentecostal sects share numerous likenesses.

But the truest distinction is the historical one. It is better to describe as *Protestant* only those churches which in the sixteenth century severed themselves from the abuses of papal domination, namely, the Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed (i.e., Calvinist or Presbyterian). The "cross-breeding" which took place during the Reformation era makes those three an identifiable unit. All other denominations sprang from them and not directly from the late medieval church. Initially derivative and sectarian, they should in all justice bear a different and more apt title such as *Dissenters,* thus reserving the word *Protestant* for the three elder groups.

With these strictures in mind, I commend Father Weigel's essay as a worthy expression of an understanding which is so requisite today.

ALLEN CABANISS
University of Mississippi
University, Mississippi

Intellectual Complacency

Because his daring and sensible book on American literature, *The Great Tradition* (1933), was such an important milestone in my own intellectual development, I was vastly saddened by the piece "Liberalism in the Fifties," which Granville Hicks had in your Summer issue. I don't mean that the literary judgments he made twenty-three years ago would all stand today; a good many of them seem as superficial to me now as I am sure they do to him. What I mean is that Mr. Hicks has walked off and left his old basic thesis: that literature, all art and all intellectual creativity, spring and can only spring from the struggle for a better life, and that that struggle will be necessary as long as there is any life.

After bickering a little with other critics and commentators, Mr. Hicks concludes that we have indeed achieved almost everything we set out to achieve at the beginning of the Red Decade, and that if our intellectuals seem complacent it cannot be denied that they are entitled to their complacency. He also seems to think that such warranted complacency can produce literature. If he has not already been disappointed in that hope, I can only believe that he will be disappointed soon, because if he isn't it will only be a sign that his standards have fallen.

Have we indeed achieved the social goals of a quarter-century ago? I invite Mr. Hicks to visit us in Alabama. He should have been on the campus in Tuscaloosa last spring when Autherine Lucy, with a Supreme Court decision in her book bag, knocked at the door of the University.

Our South belies any warrant to complacency, but there are a thousand other places in the world which belie it even more. To these Mr. Hicks refers only in passing, when he says that "what happens here affects the entire world." It certainly does. And currently the influence of the United States is affecting the entire world almost wholly by backing up the forces of reaction, oppression and gun-toting colonialism. Our present prosperity may or may not be about to go out; the fact is that our present foreign policy has already gone as far to the right as it is possible to get. And murder in Cyprus or Guatemala is as much the concern of the American intellectual as murder on Anacostia Flats.

Let me conclude with the concluding paragraph of *The Great Tradition:*

"Let no one be deceived; difficult years loom before us and the very existence of

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art may seem to be imperiled. Revolutionary writers will have obstacles of their own to overcome and peculiar temptations to resist. But certainly we cannot despair of the eventual outcome, and even in the days of stress revolutionary writers will have a kind of courage that others cannot share. For they will know that what is struggling for utterance on their pages is the spirit, not of an isolated individual, not of some literary clique, not of some decadent tradition, but the spirit of that class with which the future rests and into whose hands the highest hopes of mankind are entrusted. They will know that, whatever destruction the future may bring, they are allied with the forces of construction. They will know they are participating in a battle that, in the long run, is for civilization itself, and they will have no doubt of the outcome."

RICHARD P. GREENLEAF
Boaz, Alabama

Orwell and Literature

By the year 2050, Orwell's language specialist tells Winston, "The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Milton, Shakespeare, Byron—they'll exist only in Newspeak versions." In Oceania the means of destruction was control of the dictionary. In Fabian America it may well be the systematic discrediting of established canons of criticism.

In "Orwell: History as Nightmare" [AS: Spring, 1956], Irving Howe inadvertently demonstrates the rationale of this second means. His argument goes thus:

No spontaneous desire to reread *1984*? Elementary, my dear Watson. "About some books . . . our reluctance to return to them is the true measure of our admiration."

No verisimilitude? This complaint reflects a certain narrowness of modern taste.

The style is journalistic and "sweaty"? The objector has "succumbed to the pleasant tyrannies of estheticism."

Orwell's characters are thin, two-dimensional, unreal? A compliment—but meaningless. The complaint "can have meaning only if the world of Oceania is held to be not impossible but inconceivable."

1984 is grounded in the psychopathology of its author? All books are so grounded. "But it is also grounded in his psychological health; otherwise it could not penetrate so deeply the social reality of our time." This is Professor Howe's sole positive point. But unless one can say with him, "the nightmare is ours," even this point lacks cogency.

It becomes clear finally that what we are witnessing in "Orwell: History as Nightmare" is not an assessment of Orwell's book but a transvaluation of values, a *bouleversement* of the traditional process of criticism. In this process, *1984* is not the subject but a touchstone.

It is a mistake to suppose, of course, that the "usual literary categories" here impugned are eternal verities. It may be a mistake even to assume, as I do, that they are as pertinent to *1984* as to "the claptrap of science fiction" (the epithet is Professor Howe's). But it is not a mistake, I think, to rely on them until their irrelevance is proven, until better, more usable categories are available.

The author's stated argument for their irrelevance—that since these categories "are no longer significant" *in* the situation *1984* describes, therefore they are not applicable to the description itself—is patently fallacious. And his unstated argument—that since traditional canons have not shown *1984* (a work of outstanding merit) to be a work of outstanding merit, the categories assumed by these critical canons must be irrelevant—is hardly less so. My conclusion is that, at least, insofar as the evidence here offered is concerned, the case of Orwell versus the "usual literary categories" is still pending.

CECIL MILLER
Manhattan, Kansas

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